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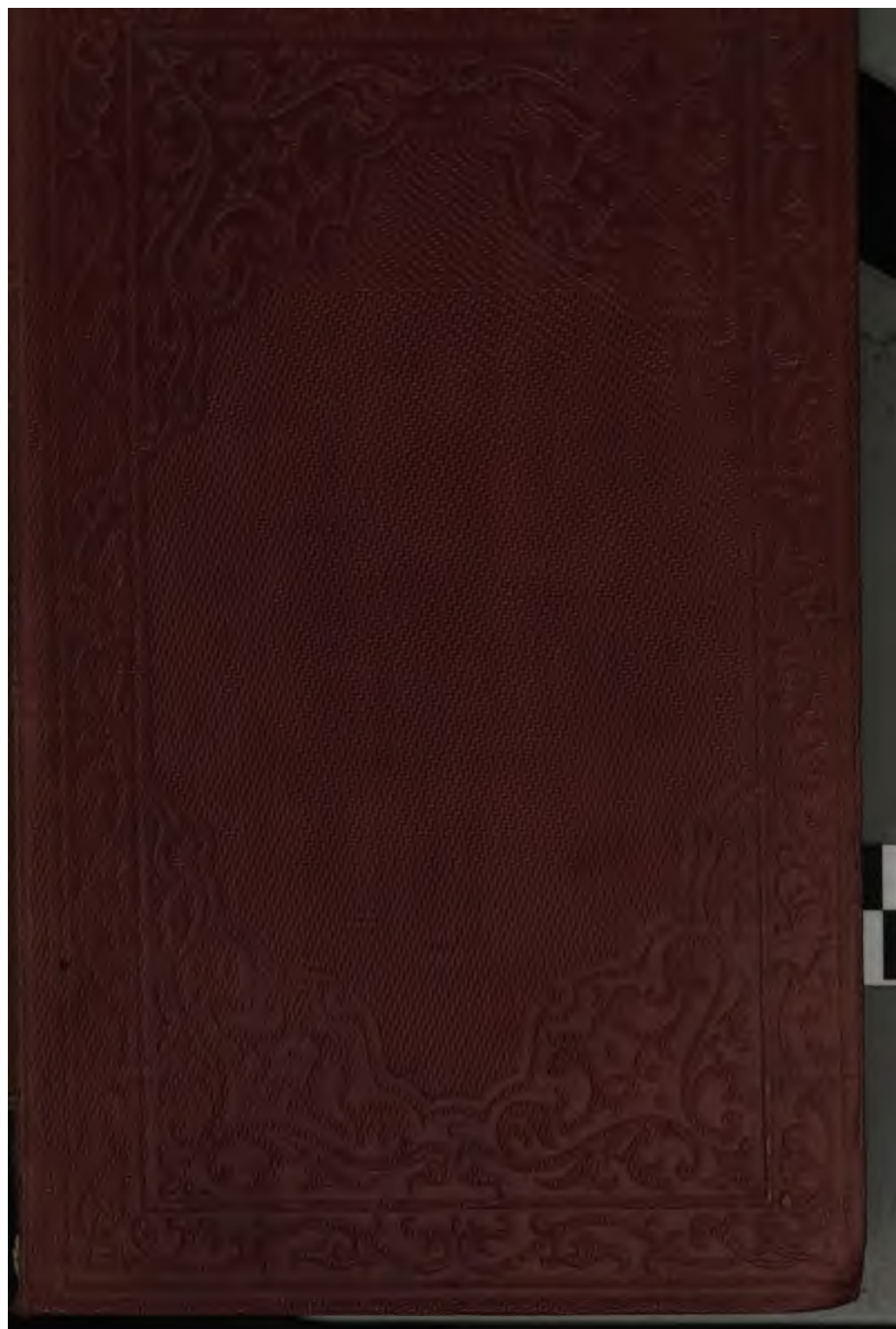
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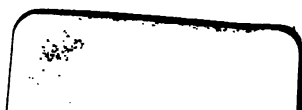
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BLONDELLE.

A STORY OF THE DAY.

B L O N D E L L E.

A STORY OF THE DAY.

"Let men tremble to win the hand of woman, unless they win along with it the utmost passion of her heart."—HAWTHORNE.

"The man that does possess my heart
Has twice as much perfection,
And does excel you in desert
As much as in affection."

SIR JOHN SUCKLING.



LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1852.

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TO VANADIS.

P R E F A C E .

IN laying the following story before the public, we can offer no apology for so doing; for indeed have we none to offer.

No friends, indulgent or otherwise, have seen it, therefore we cannot say that it was at their recommendation that it has been published.

Here is our story, and if any one who may chance to read it should not disapprove thereof, we owe that kind reader no apology. If, on the contrary, there be any who should not form so favourable an opinion of our little work, we are convinced that nothing we can say can alter their sentiments.

Lest, however, any bad jester should pass his

bad jests on the respected lady to whom our lucubrations are addressed, we wish it to be clearly understood that the said lady is not Mrs. Harris, but no less a person than Dame Penelope Jane, relict of the late Vice-Admiral Sir Gustavus Bowler Dimblebee, K.C.B., G.C.M.G., &c. &c.

LONDON :

JUNE, 1852.

BLONDELLE.

CHAPTER I.

What concentrated joy or woe in blest or blighted love.

TUPPER.

MADAM, do you keep a diary? If so, you spend your time uselessly. "Cardinal events are not to be forgotten." Are there not bright spots in your life that ever seem recent, that shine on you cheerfully long after they have passed, that strike you forcibly when in the mind's eye you look back on the path of the world through which you have travelled; never dimming in the darkness of time, but even after their first brilliancy is somewhat diminished, glowing like the ball of fire into which the setting sun dwindles? A mother can tell the

birthday of her eldest born without recourse to the family Bible; and if aught joyous has ever happened to you, no written record is required to keep you in mind of it.

And the dark events of life. Are you likely to forget them? Does not the heart feel unconsciously when the day dawns a mournful anniversary? If a loved one had died on the 4th of October, let us say; on the 4th of October of each succeeding year you wake with an aching heart. Be assured that of joy and grief no chronicle need be kept, and the rest is all "leather and prunella," in which good trifles and evil trifles are so mixed that they counterbalance and cancel each other, and are not worth recollection.

These remarks, let us say, have nothing to do with the following work, which it is to be hoped you will read, but have been written with a view to account for whatever may appear as disjointed or unconnected therein. Life, it strikes us, is not a narrative. It consists of those spots, bright or dark, which we have already mentioned, which are separated from each other by gaps, wide and not worth the fathoming, even though it were possible to

sound them. Therefore, in this book, we have written down such scenes of the lives we are about to tell of without reference to that system and order which writers usually affect.

Chronologically we will endeavour to be correct ; but in case we should fly from one topic to another, or introduce and discard characters at all abruptly, we now, once for all, apologise for any lack of "dovetailedness." Perchance the tale may flow smoothly ; we at the present moment know nothing about it ; but for its faults, we impute them to the reality of what we tell, for plain rugged truth will not allow too much polish.

Thus let us begin.

It was a very wet day in London, and we cannot deny that the rain damps the pleasures of this as well as those of most other cities.

As a last resource, a company of damsels and youths of high degree had assembled in a riding-school to take the exercise which the weather debarred their enjoying in the air. Laughs resounded in the space, "quips, cranks and merry jests" flew plenteously round as the horses galloped in the arena, bearing joyous spirits. Young men performed feats of agility,

tilting at each other and riding over easy barriers with a grace which, though it could easily be excelled by the hireling acrobat, was rewarded by the bright smiles of bystanding beauty. Even this, however, lost its charms after a short time, and the wearied horses having been led to their stalls, the little throng was preparing unwillingly to depart, and to undergo in their own apartments the rest of the dreary day.

The conversation, lengthened to delay the parting, was gradually flagging, and excitement, not yet enough gratified, felt that it must keep for a future day. Appointments already trebly settled were again canvassed, and sequels to jokes once good became fainter and fainter. Farewells more than once heard were renewed, and carriages came grumbling to the door. The period was ready for an event, as now Britain is waiting for the coming man.

Suddenly the gate opened, and admitted a small party consisting of a lady, an elderly matron, and a youth of but lately ripened years. With the first and the last of this band we have to deal; for the present let us consign the central ornament to that obscurity

which, in novels as in life, envelopes, perhaps justly, the chaperon. But let not the reader be mistaken in his estimate of the writer. We by no means participate in the atrocious sentiment we have just expressed. To us chaperons form the pleasure of existence; our happiest hours are spent in their society; their conversation alone enlivens for us the dreariness of the world. We unfortunately do not seek for the society of the pure damsel. We admire her beauty, we are won by her innocence, and we look upon it as a thing at a distance, as a deity to be revered but not approached; but such is our opinion of ourselves, that after severe self-examination we do not feel ourselves warranted in coming near her too familiarly. We are too human to enjoy her society; we feel ourselves as much out of place with her as a dancing-master must feel at a Moravian love-feast. Our talk, alas! smacks too much of this world, and we admire the more pungent conversation in which only a married woman may indulge. We would not touch the goddess with an unclean hand, and once we have found that being sent to purge ourselves in the stream of holiness, another

already clean has offered the sacrifice. We found, though we felt ourselves superior to our rival in wit in this case, to our cost, the truth of the saying of Sadi of Shiraz: "The scent of onions from a beautiful mouth is more fragrant than the odour of the rose from the hand of one who is ugly." With this diversion, made to exculpate ourselves, let us continue our plot.

Us, do we say? but we feel unequal to the task, we will not of ourselves venture to describe her flowing locks, her dimpled mouth her fairy figure and her laughing eyes, but we will borrow the words of an Eastern to draw the picture of the fair one. Thus does he tell of the loveliness of "Termeenah, the moon-cheeked maid, glittering like the sun," and in his words we will bring before our reader's eye the approach of Emmeline Brooke.

"She came full of fragrance and colour; her eyebrows two bent bows; her ringlets, nooses; two rose-leaves flown on the cypress, her cheeks; her lilies shedding wine and diffusing amber out of Paradise; two rubies beaming in the concealed place, pierced through the middle with fire-hued diamond; rings in her glittering

ear-lobes ; lips and neck formed of sugar ; prudent and pure of soul as if earth had no share in her ; so was she formed in chastity and beauty." Will this suffice ?

As to her male companion, we will draw his portrait ourselves, for we fear that there are few of the young men of the present day who could make the boasts of Godfrey of Bouillon, or whose innocence would suffer much from contact with us. A few words will be enough.

He was tall, slight, and not fully framed, dark, with an agreeable though not strictly handsome face, piercing eyes and a winning manner that few women could resist. He was walking slightly lame from the effects of a hunting accident.

As the two entered the arena most of the assemblage pressed forward to greet them, especially the lady ; and the new arrival furnishing new topics, the departure was evidently more remote than a few moments previously had been anticipated.

A groom came forward leading a magnificent little horse, black as the trappings of a hearse, and saddled for a lady. Impatient of control and naturally vicious, it tossed its bridled head and arched neck, kicked, plunged and showed all

the symptoms of a bad disposition of which a horse is capable. Amongst horses, however, as amongst men, we often take a favourite, not so much from its intrinsic worth as regards temper or intellect, as for personal beauty ; and here let us remark, that in this, equinity (if we may be allowed the term) has advantages over humanity where beauty fades. A horse is never so to call it *passé*. In its old age the neck is arched, the mane is long, and the eye though perhaps blind still retains much of its pristine beauty ; whereas, in life an old woman or an old man are not generally so pleasing in appearance, especially, as is often the case, when conscious of her or his past good looks they seek to remedy the defects of nature by adventitious aids.

Emmeline joyfully welcomed the little steed as it trotted up to her, and as she caressed its flowing mane and patted its glossy skin, it neighed merrily on recognizing her. Mistress and servant, they seemed fitted for each other ; and when the girl mounted, a buzz of admiration went round the circle. Two or three of those present, young men from Leicestershire, again ordered their horses to accompany her, and they cantered round in peace.

Now Malvina, for so was the mare called, exhibited her grace and that of her rider—she pawed the ground and shook her head, while the light hand of her mistress never swerving from its hold, kept the courser from too great excesses gently but firmly, till sated with the amusement she alighted, and dared the men present to ride her steed. One man had married a wife and could not come; another had ridden enough; and little Lebas, of the French Embassy, who had amused the company, by assuming a character most suited to his nation and his person—that of buffoon—having mounted, was glad enough to descend on the other side. One after another they refused to make use of her offer, for they all knew the futility of any attempts to ride the capricious Malvina. They knew what the satiric Frenchman hath said, that ridicule is more dishonourable than dishonour, and they preferred the dishonour of putting off their cowardice on idleness than the ridicule of being thrown off the horse that a girl had easily managed. And were they wrong? At length, disgusted by the timid conduct of the youth, turning to her cousin (for such he was, and the

writer's nephew) who had accompanied her, she called to him, as he leant listlessly against the barrier.

"Charley,—Charley Dalrymple, do come and show them that at any rate *my* cousin can manage Malvina."

The boy was about to excuse himself on the plea of his lameness, but emulous to excel the mixed crowd near, and stung at a malicious glance from the little Frenchman Lebas, who longed for a failure to cover his own, he limped to her side, and quickly removing the saddle and buckling on a horse-cloth, with difficulty mounted on the back of the horse.

Malvina at first seemed astonished at the change, and slowly moved as the young *attaché* urged her forward, but at length she appeared to have regained her original vivacity, and springing forward endeavoured to cast off the unusual weight. Nobly did the youth check her wild career, and as she plunged and leaped into space, gracefully did he keep his seat, amidst the plaudits of the envious men and frightened maidens. Round and round was he borne in the arena, and though in agony from his wounded leg, he pressed his knees against

the horse's sides and sat like a statue—ay, firm as that on Constitution Hill. Fearful were the movements of the animal, like those of the Lutin horse, which, of beautiful exterior, lures its riders to destruction. But the youth, though he felt his strength failing him too much to check the infuriated beast, and though he saw destruction staring at him full in the face, disdained to call for assistance, for the grin of the little demoniac Frenchman still lingered in his eye.

A stage stood at one portion of the amphitheatre, where, when the place had been in the possession of a capitalist, fairies had displayed their steps, and dread monarchs were in the habit of issuing sentences of death in a stomachic tone of voice. Between this and the circle was a space wherein untuneful musicians had plied their trade in accompaniment of the above spectacles. As Malvina had passed this, more than once had she glanced at it with a longing eye, till at length she took a resolution, and, a true female, lost not a moment in executing it. Suddenly stopping and rearing, when she next arrived at the other side opposite this stage, feeling the

bridle gradually slackening in the enfeebled hand of her rider, she rushed with frantic speed, and leaping the intervening space, the desks that still stood there, and the shades of the footlights, she landed safely with her rider still unseated.

Having attained this position, she evinced her joy thereat by various antics, which though probably gratifying to herself, were of greater danger to poor Dalrymple than those she had hitherto performed. For she leapt over imaginary barriers on the sounding wood, stood on her forelegs, then on her haunches, thereby nearly bringing his head in heavy contact with the beams that hung over the stage to receive the painted scenery that once had adorned it. Still the intrepid boy forbore to call for aid, but the blood streamed from the wound in his leg, the bandages of which had slipped, and he felt his strength, though not his courage, oozing out at his fingers' ends. He endeavoured to turn away the horse and once again to leap into the ring, but his hands refused their office. The women screamed in horror.

Artists paint good angels with feminine features, and with justice. For does she ever forget those she once has loved, or does

she ever desert them in the hour of need? The men that stood around, envious of his success, pretended to believe there was no danger, and little Lebas, stood delighted at the prospect of seeing the fall of a rival who had eclipsed him. A rival! will you say, perhaps it was the first time the two had met. Madam, you are correct, but a Frenchman looks on every fellow-man in the light of a rival, and fears him, though assured of his own success.

Emmeline, casting a look of scorn on the bystanders, lost not a moment. She cast the skirt of her habit over her arm, and with the assistance of a desk, clambering over the barrier, ascended the steps that led from the orchestra to the stage. Charley's hands vainly endeavoured to grasp the reins, for his legs could no longer assist him in clinging to his seat. With a soft word, she fearlessly grasped the flowing bridle in her tiny hand, and the brute stood trembling with excitement by its mistress's side. The men shamed into assistance, now crowded round the group, and the unconscious boy was lifted to the ground.

We have been long in describing a scene, the performance of which occupied but a moment,

but that moment brought forth many things that its predecessor could not have contemplated.

Feelings lie concealed for an event to call them forward, and not the least doth love. Love, for we must now philosophise on what we know but little, will grow, increase, nay reach maturity in a maiden's bosom while she herself may be still unconscious thereof. It waits for an event; and when the period arrives for the arrival of consciousness, it wells forth in its exuberance, the dammed waters pour forth in a manner joyous to the parties concerned as it is terrific to the spectator. Occasionally the accumulated mass, impatient of restraint, endeavours to make itself apparent before the right time, it knocks at the barrier that keeps it, and gives distant signs of its presence. But these attempts of love to make its appearance prematurely, often meet with the same end as its fruits would in pursuing the same conduct—an abortion.

To prepare the family, the chaperon returned home by herself in a cab, and Emmeline took her cousin, still unconscious, in the roomy family coach with the large escutcheon of many quarterings. Emmeline sat in a corner of the

vehicle gazing on her cousin, while she chafed his cold bloodless hand between her own. And as she sat alone with him she felt what before had been undefined. The knockings we have before mentioned assumed a shape, the ghost had disappeared and left a stern—no, not a stern—reality. The event of her love had arrived ; she had saved him, and the fact had suddenly brought the bud to maturity. Woman loves the recipient of her kindness as much as man doth the bestower. Emmeline gazed upon the youth fondly—more fondly than she had ever before done, and she tried at first to persuade herself that the anxiety she felt for him was caused by that cousinly affection she had hitherto borne towards him ; but in vain, every thought in that direction brought its own refutation.

The French satirist tells you that “ dans les premières passions, les femmes aiment l’amant ;” and Emmeline, though she had probably never heard of him, felt that his sayings are true. She also felt the truthfulness of another, our own great philosopher, for hear also what Lord Bacon saith : “ There was never a proud man thought so absurdly well of himself as the lover doth of the person loved,” and Emmeline’s

ideas concerning the person loved had undergone no slight alteration.

Hitherto she had looked upon him as not remarkably handsome, nor even a great genius ; her idea of his courage had never been sounded, and she had regarded him as a gay, merry-hearted cousin with whom she might ride, dance and amuse herself, but nothing further. Now, she knew not why, those sentiments were altogether changed. His features had undergone a material transformation, for though his eyes—his best feature—were closed, she looked upon his lineaments as those of an Apollo, or any other good-looking man, heathen, Christian, ancient or modern. She recollected his fondness, his manners, his accomplishments. The two first had really always been good, but as to the last, beyond dancing, his attainments had been nothing remarkable. Now his singing resounded in her ears, and his drawings, consisting of boats, races and caricatures usually drawn on blotting-paper, hitherto not quite perpendicular nor peculiarly well proportioned, rivalled, in her mind's eye, those of Horace Vernet or Sir Joshua Reynolds. The remembrance of his jokes made her smile in a melan-

choly manner, and appeared a perfect coruscation, though heretofore she had looked upon them as the effects of high spirits, and as being of a somewhat mild caste, nor, by the way, had she been very much out in her estimate of them. In fact, she felt herself dissolving in fondness, her gaiety had fled, as she thought for ever, and she was henceforth

“ All adoration, duty and obedience ;
All humbleness, all patience—
All purity, all trial, all observance.”

She bent over him with the intention of bestowing on his forehead the kiss her cousinhood had since their childhood warranted, but she blushed when she found it was not the kiss of a cousin, neither was it on his forehead.

Dear lady, do these details alarm you ? Pray moderate your nervousness for a few moments longer, for you may perhaps be shown how, in this case, the crime brought with it its own punishment. Emmeline placed her hand, we will not say her lily hand, upon her cousin's forehead, and brushed back the hair that had fallen over it, and she bent over him to see if consciousness was returning, with really no evil

or interested motive ; but finding him still in syncope, she repeated the kiss of peace. Madam, did you ever experience a revulsion of feeling ? On finding yourself thrown into a deep well of grief, did you ever, like Graciosa, behold a little door suddenly open which led you into fairy-land ? From the height of happiness have you ever been thrown into the abyss of despair ? or did you ever experience, what is worse, the contrary extreme ? If such has ever been the case, you can sympathise with Emmeline ; or if such is not the case, your kind womanly feelings will lead you in the same direction ; for on her second attack, she beheld peeping from beneath Charley's waistcoat, which his exertions had disordered, a narrow blue riband, somewhat the worse for constant wear, and tied to a hair chain, the appearance of which had not been much improved by absence from its original owner.

“ Nature is often hidden, sometimes overcome, seldom extinguished,” and the nature of woman, with its principal characteristic, curiosity, has never changed since our first dear ancestress ate the apple, which has been the cause of languages, nations, wars, tumults and dissensions ;

has occasioned every crime, public and private ; has made us put on clothes, go to school, and learn to hate each other ; has caused us to write this veracious work ; and last, not least, has obliged us to strive to be good instead of being so, without an effort, from birth upwards. This feeling had never very strongly actuated Emmeline. She perhaps had undergone little attacks of the disorder, but had never been very culpable in gratifying it, probably, for the same reason that most ugly women are virtuous, she had never been exposed to strong temptation. But now, on the first occasion, her resolution forsook her. Shall she take it out ? No, and she relinquished the hold of the string that she had taken in her first impulse. What nonsense ! Probably his mother's picture—dear Aunt Catherine ! I long to see her lovely face again. What harm can there be in so doing. And the string hung rather in a loop outside the dress, then a little more, then a small enamelled case not much larger than a locket, with a diamond serpent thereon, lay exposed to view.

Poor Emmeline ! Like that said dear grandmother we have before mentioned, and whose

introduction as a simile we cannot claim as new, if you had forborne to proceed further what misery might you have saved yourself; but it was *Kismet*. Your evil Norny urged you on, and let us believe that human nature could not have withstood the temptation to the fault which you committed, and which was amply, ah! how amply avenged. Psyche's punishment was again to occur.

Emmeline took the casket in her hand. How strange it looked. The diamonds on the one side, and a cypher on the other she could not make out. Then the opportunity, the—ay, the jealousy, the promptings of that wicked spirit—“*via* says the fiend”—the natural weakness of humanity cannot disobey. We need say no more, the spring was touched and the jewel opened.

Painted in miniature by her own hand, a master-piece of hers, which she had worked at for years with all the assiduity of love, which had been lost and sought for in vain lay therein—smiling—life-like. The deep-black eye was there, the glowing cheek, the full red lip, the Grecian nose and the arched brow. There was the high, smooth forehead; and the hair, the

black luxuriant hair, which had been allowed to fall loosely to heighten the effect ; for when does a girl look so lovely as when her tresses are freed from the comb and

“ La chevelure l'inonde
Plus longue qu'un manteau de roi.”

Ay ! how could Emmeline be mistaken in this, and how did it explain many things which the reserve of another, the unjustifiable reserve, had kept in doubt ? She looked, and she recalled every circumstance that had attended the painting, how she had waited for the carmine in the cheeks, and how she had nearly spoil the whole by dropping a brush full of Indian ink on the chin. Before her lay the picture of her whom Charley loved, a picture which she felt had long lain next his heart. Of whom it was the likeness Emmeline need not inquire.

’Twas her sister Blondelle Brooke!

Farewell Emmeline for a short space, Asmodeus summons us to other scenes ; and with the licence we have already given ourselves we will, as says the Grecian poet,

“ Pass from thee to another hymn.”

CHAPTER II.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round.

COWPER.

WE must now travel, as the somnambulists say, to another region—to one of those small abodes where grandeur resides on a contracted scale, and its dominion confined within narrow limits, luxury seems to abound, and a little extravagance goes a great way. We wend our way to one of those houses, in fact, to which dowagers retire with two thousand a year, and which young couples affect, with a view to paying their rent for two-thirds of the year by a judicious letting during the remaining four months.

The face of the mistress of the house, the elder of the two ladies, sitting in the drawing-room, beamed good-naturedly on the January fire, while her eye revealed a depth of thought and acuteness of perception not always the lot of British dowagers. Nor will you, Madam, be astonished at this fact, when you are informed that the lady in question, whose head is enveloped in a cap, the bands of which were tied in a contented knot beneath her good-natured countenance, had produced works which had gained her a name and an enviable position amidst the writers of the age. Near her, on a sofa drawn to the fire, reclined a damsel who bore traces of her mother's features, from the intellectual cast of which beauty by no means detracted. Through the twilight which the flame afforded, the creamy-whiteness of her skin gave sufficient guarantee of what its effect must be when lit up by dress and the brilliancy of a ball or other entertainment; and the easy attitude, in which she lay gave proof positive that the small rounded waist was not the result of artificial appliances.

It seems superfluous to give you, so well acquainted with the details of what you would

call the London World, our description of the apartment which your quick perception must have already conjured up ; but as perhaps others not enjoying your social advantages may deign to cast an eye over these pages, for their benefit we will endeavour to give to the said eye a picture of the interior.

For this purpose it will not be necessary to give an exact inventory of the furniture, to catalogue the Davenports, Woburns, and other abnormal movables which were strewn in every direction, nor the colour and pattern of the damask of which the curtains and chair-coverings were composed. We will, however, mention that, in addition to the comforts of life, the eye rested every moment on some work of art and those little trifles in which women even of the highest genius delight.

These were strewn on the tables in that delightful confusion, which it seems to be woman's mission to arrange, and which, as it is at variance with all principles of order, charms the spectator from the well-conceived designs of its irregularity. Smelling-bottles, paper-weights, small statues, (we will not deign to borrow the word *statuettes*,) cups of metal and glass, curiously

wrought ; enamel, cunningly devised ; jewels of silver and jewels of gold ; gems of price whose merit consists in the imitation of baser articles, all lay in a disarray so artistical that the master-hand of the artist could nowhere be discovered.

The ladies were in the habit of receiving guests every evening to partake of the un-inebriating cup, and the period at which we now see them is that which elapses between dessert and the first arrival.

The conversation that was carried on by mother and daughter, was not of that ordinary every-day nature that common-place minds in their envy, attribute to the private intercourse of those who in public are agreeable. Household incidents may have been discussed but in a manner, which threw a grace over the somewhat dull details of grocery and mutton, and as the bright sparks flew abundantly at those and higher topics, the ready laugh of either was never lacking at her companion's repartee. Mother and daughter, they looked on one another with evident pride.

The rain was pattering in the streets, and as straw, laid down for certain purposes, deadened

the sound of wheels, the approach of a visitor had not been heard. The door opened and admitted—

“Mr. Halbut Dee Cliffud.”

Now, is it necessary to describe to you this well-known character, this friend of French counts and British peers, who is equally distinguished for his personal appearance, as for good nature and for the enemies of his success? Need we relate to you his history, his birth, his manhood and his mode of life? No, Madam, you know him, we know him, Jackson knows him. We three hold a deep regard for him, and we really do not speak ironically. Soon, one after another the guests flocked in, principally men, for the weather was too bad for ladies to venture forth. A tall and elderly reprobate, of good military rank and not peculiarly distinguished services, of large proportions and white woolly hair came in and grinned a platitude which he considered facetious.

“You are looking very well, Miss Dalton, always looking well, by Jove—hur, hur!”

Then came a great satirist, smiling blandly through wire spectacles and he saluted you, Miss Dalton with a laconism, which you appre-

ciated and rewarded with an approving smile, but which the greasy Colonel near him could comprehend no more than that chubby, vulgar youth next him, who had accoutred himself in a blaze of studs. Now arrives a clever traveller, who quietly amused your mother the whole evening, followed by a tall, gawky youth who lives by toadying and platitudinizing, if we may so call it, tender maidens of aristocratic birth. But it would be endless if we were to relate the succession of arrivals, as the daily journals would say—of the dandies, the wits, the agreeable men, and the fools who followed each other; some to amuse, others to be amused; some to say clever things, others to obtain a wholesale stock to retail; some who liked your society for its own sake and for yours, others who liked it that by the reputation of enjoying it, they might sell their stupidity at a fictitious value.

“To count them all demands a thousand tongues,
A throat of brass, and adamantine lungs,”

and though perhaps Miss Dalton “inspired by you,” we might “the mighty labour dauntlessly pursue,” you will consider we have done our duty when “their chiefs we sing.”

And the conversation can that be transcribed?

“The tart reply,
The logic and the wisdom and the wit,
And the loud laugh!”

Can we relate all the brilliancy of the pair, and some of their guests, and the stupidity of others? Shall we repeat how an agreeable man told of a fat peeress who danced a cachucha to amuse her guests, and how the traveller snubbed the young gentleman “studded like the night?” How some one remarked on the vulgarity of Mrs. Brill, the rich banker’s wife, and on the toad-eating superciliousness of Mrs. Shenkin, and how every one agreed in the assertion? Would it please you, sweet Angelina Jones, to know that the gawky youth calumniated many from whom he received daily kindness, and how a good-natured major of hussars checked him? Perhaps it would. But we will not “pander,” as a learned and somewhat time-serving bishop says, “to the morbid appetites of diseased minds craving for excitement,” and we turn from the subject in disgust.

Late in the evening, as most of the guests

were thinking of departure, and as the store of topics had gradually oozed forth, a ring was heard proceeding from the bell marked "visitors;" and rapid steps having been heard ascending the staircase, the door opened, and the darkly-attired butler announced in a pompous and stage-statesman kind of voice—Lord Doveton, and Mr. Smirke.

Again we must diverge from the track of our history, to inform you how it came to pass, that these two names were announced in the same breath. For Lord Doveton knew not Smirke.

Smirke had been drinking tea, consuming muffins, and playing whist with some old ladies at the house of a respectable aunt, who dwelt in one of the small streets that abound in the neighbourhood of Chelsea. Having sufficiently refreshed himself, and having lost seven postage stamps, he was about to proceed to his own lodgings in Cecil Street, Strand, there to concoct a paper for his weekly periodical the "Pandemonium," a journal which doubtless you peruse weekly, and the slashing articles of which are generally attributed to Mr. Smirke. As this gentleman, however, was passing through the

street in which Mrs. Dalton resided, and as he approached the door, treading on tip toe that he might not sully the purity of his "gent's evening boots," which he had donned in honour to his aunt, in the hurry of so doing forgetting his clogs, a brougham dashing to the door, disgorged Lord Doveton. Long had it been the wish of Mr. Smirke to become acquainted with this young peer, and knowing a little bit of intelligence that would ensure him a favourable reception, he followed his lordship in as the door opened, fondly hoping for the long desired introduction.

"Well, Lord Doveton, what news?" inquired Mrs. Dalton.

"None, actually none," responded he in a doomed tone of voice.

The question was repeated again and addressed to Mr. Smirke.

"What news, Mr. Smirke?"

"Great news! Guess."

"Give it up," sighed Lord Doveton.

"Sir Guy Trevethen is to marry Miss Blondelle Brooke," hissed the editor.

There was a sudden start in the circle.

"Poor devil!" quoth the peer.

"Poor girl!" thought Miss Dalton.

He thought of the bridegroom.

She thought of the bride.

"Well, Sir," you may exclaim, "and what is this all for? Do you take me to a house in Belgravia, while I am snugly ensconced in my house in Wimpole Street? Do you drag me all that way this cold January, February or March morning" (as the case may be) "simply to announce a marriage that is generally known?"

"Yes, my dear Madam," is our reply. "We do. Marriage is a very important consideration, it entails settlements: and in this world we have often seen happiness sacrificed to a good match. Therefore do not blame us, if to announce an event so important in the annals of the world, at any rate the civilized world, as the marriage of a Cornish baronet, we should have given up so many pages.

Mr. I. Disraeli has given to the world a long article on secret history, in which he indulges in many profound observations. "From the fulness of their accounts," he says, in speaking of writers of such chronicles, "we recover much which had been lost to us in the

general view of history, and it is by this more intimate acquaintance with persons and circumstances, that we are enabled to correct the less distinct and sometimes the fallacious appearances in the pages of the popular historian." Now this is a piece of secret history. So read it attentively, for you know not what it may reveal. You may find some connection between the facts herein narrated and the Papal aggression, or some vague phrase may give you a hint as to a recent "*coup-d'état*," or the presidential election that is not to take place this year in a land we wot of. Turn your mind particularly to this record of some facts from real life, of the present day, in which nought will be exaggerated. You will be told of one

" Whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe."

Read, Madam, and in reading learn. In this tale a true one of this century, nay, of the current olympiad you will have "a distinct notion of one particular;" and in chronicling the facts we will unite the two qualities which Mr. Disraeli

affirms are antagonistic, for we will be "a fanciful and passionate historian," *and also* "an historian who enlightens while he charms;" and this being, we will use the words of the learned and judicious Hooker "a theorem both understood and confessed by all, to labour in proof thereof were superfluous."

We lay great store by our modesty.

But there are circumstances in which a writer, however jocular he may be naturally, must lay aside his jocularity. It is not seemly for a man to wear coloured garments at a funeral, nor should puercules play at leap-frog over a tomb-stone. A dirge is ill-timed when sung at a wedding, and it is ill-joking with a hungry man. Therefore, in some of the chapters which succeed, we must often doff the Soccus to don the Cothurnus; and we now apologize again to you, for there is no end to our apologies, if we ever should abandon the canon implied by a man of whom you probably never heard, named Quintilian who saith "*nec comœdia in cothurnos assurgit, nec contra tragœdia socco ingreditur.*"

CHAPTER III.

A babe in a house is a well-spring of pleasure, a messenger of peace and love ;—

* * * * *

And the bents unto good or evil may be given in the hours of infancy.

* * * * *

Hold the little hands in prayer, teach the weak knees their kneeling.

* * * * *

Those parents are best honoured whose character best deserve it.

TUPPER.

MANY years have elapsed since Sir Basil Brooke first made his appearance in the world of London, the representative of a younger branch of a house known in history, members of which even at the present day bear the purple of prelates and of senators and the embroidery of successful commanders.

Sir Basil is, as may be inferred, by no means in the bloom of life ; in fact, Lord Doveton has been heard to speak of him as " Old Brooke ;" nay, occasionally even as " that old rip Brooke," by no means a misnomer. Still, though seasons in no small numbers have passed over his head, his figure through the instrumentality of skilful adornment, entitles him to a certain distinction among that tribe of elderly gentlemen, who flutter as middle aged moths round the flame of beauty, aspiring and boasting of success in their amorous campaigns, with much greater assumption and much more attenuated principles of morality than their younger rivals.

Sir Basil Brooke's wife still lives, but his ideas of connubial obligations and paternal duties do not prevent him, it appears, from amusements which in these days create a smile and which are more consonant with the Mohammedan than the Christian code of morality. Brooke it has been said, can tell you to a fraction, the price given for the ponies of Mrs. Desborough Dudley, (known by her friends as Polly Dudley) whom you may have seen driving them, while taking your airing on the banks of the Serpentine. Nay, that handsome young

Finn, the banker, can tell you to what sum amount the cheques drawn by Sir Basil "for self or bearer," and also that Mrs. Desborough Dudley represents the bearer, though the Miss Brookes often find their little allowances for gloves and shoes very much in arrear. Yes, Sir Basil's cheques are a true picture of himself. Through life all his actions have been "for self," "bearer" is a flimsy guise. But it is not fair to make such an assertion without adducing proofs in support thereof, so we must enter into a short detail of his career.

Brooke had been born one of those beings, the favourites of novel writers, and to their mother's disgust of young ladies, a younger son. Though naturally talented, his idleness at Eton and at Oxford disqualified him for any profession but the army, and accordingly a commission was procured for him, in that talented body, the household troops. Herein his untutored genius revelled in rare devices. His humour, for humour he possessed, rendered him acceptable at the orgies of his brother officers, and in addition to drinking songs and other poetical effusions he had more than once improvised small documents, in the authorship

of which he allowed some one favoured individual amongst his younger mates to join. Having obtained money from kindly capitalists who undertook to publish these works, his tact enabled him to cast on his fellow author the responsibility that they entailed.

But the spring time of his life was passing swiftly by, and he prudently calculated that he must lay by some provision for future years. His capital in trade was his face, his figure and his name, and he boldly pushed forward to ensure himself means in a less precarious manner than that he had hitherto adopted. The rain falls on the unjust as it does on the just, and unfortunately if the shower be benign, the worldly-wise turn it to better account for themselves, oftener than do the godly. Though here let us remark, that the latter, albeit they be wrapped up in holiness, do not always neglect the wealth of the ungodly. For have we not seen the heiresses that evangelical clergymen manage to allure by their sermons, and does not the serious butler often contrive to secure himself an honourable retirement?

However, in this instance the young guardsman turned his talent to profit, for by means

of his two first wares he entrapped the affections of one of the daughters of a wealthy wine merchant, and by the latter the approbation of the lady's sire. Need we say more, he married a lady endowed with beauty, with great hankering after the social great and with fifty thousand pounds.

"Glad! Brooke has made a good *coup* at last," said a captain and lieutenant-colonel, who had grown gray in arduous duties in the metropolis and its neighbourhood, as he munched his walnuts at dinner on guard, the evening of his friend's marriage.

"What a clever fellow Brooke is!" ejaculated a young ensign and lieutenant, as favour-bedeked he inspected, with the eye of a judge, the glass of claret he was about to imbibe.

Brooke, after his marriage took the world as it came, to use his own expression, and his wife, after one or two little mistakes, having brought forth twins, he took her to Paris, to see the world and its ways. She proved an adept scholar, and certainly soon obtained an insight into both, according to the Paris editions. You will understand us sufficiently, Madam, and our delicate insinuations when you are in-

formed that after his tour Captain Brooke and his wife led a life rather that of a French married couple, than the domestic bliss of an English household.

Brooke's elder brother, a worthy young man, as elder brothers often are, died, leaving a widow and no children.

Brooke succeeded to the dignity of the deceased, and was seized with remorse at having sold himself for base pelf. He consoled himself, however, by living still more after the French fashion. He went into Parliament, and by means as creditable to his wife as to himself, who winked at her proceedings, a government in whose principles he professed himself a believer, raised him to a junior office in the administration.

And you will ask, how were the daughters educated, with such a father and such a mother? We will answer well.

It is seldom that you find a man, however depraved, who would not endeavour to bring up his offspring in the way they should go. Whether it be a deference to the opinion of his fellows, or that intuitive parental feeling, which according to Mrs. Trimmer, actuates every bird, he treats his children well, and

educates them, even religiously, till they attain maturity, when, again like the birds, he usually abandons them.

And there was another spirit who watched the paths of Emmeline and Blondelle.

Lady Brooke, the widow of the brother, appeared upon the scene, and by example turned their minds to things that the precepts of the mother daily enforced ; but which her conduct, even to her children's eye, could not infuse into their minds. While Lady Brooke the mother inculcated, Lady Brooke the aunt instilled. Daily did the children repair to the small house in which the widow lived, to hear her soft voice as it told them of awful and yet hopeful truths. For she would relate of children who had died young, blessing God ; and of that innocent band who, at the dictates of their free conscience, had wandered far to regain the land of their Redeemer from the infidel and had perished in the attempt. She spoke of the child through whose mouth his Maker had warned an old man, and of others who by their holy lives had brought their parents to repentance. And when the two children returned to their home where they found no affection, no regard beyond that of

menials, and no care for ought save their personal appearance, they could not help applying to their own case some of the facts they had heard, although these had never been told them for such a purpose.

The poor infants would sit together in their nursery for hours in the winter evenings, as bursts of merriment rang forth from the rooms below, and petition "God bless papa and mamma," for they felt that those who should have prayed for their children did not even pray for themselves. When they, twining their arms round each other's necks, read those portions of the holy word their good aunt had marked for them, how painful was the disobedience to God's commands, hourly committed by those they should hold in respect. Their mother had not "lent them to the Lord," like Hannah, and though she gave them frequently "little coats," of the newest colour and fashion, they would willingly have exchanged them to be girded with the linen ephod in which Samuel grew before the Lord.

They told their aunt all this, and she, poor woman, knew not what to say.

Thus did the girls grow in beauty, and in

that Ascetic religion which characterizes youthful devotees, and their mother, having carefully superintended their music and their dancing lessons, as also their studies of the French, German and Italian tongues, as taught by various Poles and others who had left their native lands for political and other offences, allowed them as she expressed it "to amuse themselves as they liked, poor things!"

Besides that, she had some idea that elder sons rather affected young ladies of good principles, and was in hopes by her daughters' piety, to see herself in old age the mother-in-law of some good and rich bashaw; "therefore," she thought like Mr. Money-love, "to become religious to get all these, is a good and profitable design."

Yet let it not be believed that these young persons had not indulged in those innocuous flirtations which, we are informed, young ladies and gentlemen even from the tenderest years allow themselves; for, at Madame Michau's, whither beneath the maternal wing they twice in the week wended their way, and at those children's balls, at which you and we have so continually been present, they had received attentions from several young noblemen and

gentlemen clad at first in velvet tunics, and subsequently in turned-down shirt-collars and well-fitting jackets, which attentions pleased Lady Brooke mightily.

Emmeline had wept severely on hearing of the death of little Lord Buckleton, drowned at Eton, and Blondelle, at three years old, had been severely reprehended for casting off her habitual reserve, and romping with Lady Dashfield's youngest son.

But—and now let us deal in aphorisms—schemes are nearly ever frustrated from a quarter whence opposition is least expected, and Lady Brooke, with all her worldly wisdom, never foresaw that a stranger within her gates might overthrow all her undeniably well-laid schemes for grandeur and position. That young Servius Tullius of a Charles Dalrymple completely gave them a death blow.

The son of a first cousin of Sir Basil's, by a niece of the present writer, Charles had lost his father at an early, very early age, being left with ten thousand pounds, which his improvident progenitor had not been able to touch. The good of a settlement, young ladies. He also enjoyed the additional advantage of having been

left the ward of Sir Basil Brooke, his mother marrying again and proceeding to foreign parts.

During his early youth and the days in which Basil's elder brother lived, the young Dalrymple had not lived very comfortably, for, it has been stated, the interest of his money, the whole of which was available for his maintenance and education, rather went to maintain a household carried on in a style far exceeding that which the means warranted, than to defray the expenses for which it had been destined. The boy's education would have been entirely neglected during those years of aptitude in which a child lisps his alphabet, his hymns and collects, had not the same kindly influence that at a later period watched over his cousins, interposed in his favour.

Lady Brooke—the Dowager we may call her—with no children of her own, and with philoprogenitiveness fully developed, devoted her innate and dormant affections to those who seemed in need thereof, and little Charley found in her a friend. As to his amusements, they were rather of a simple nature, and consisted chiefly—or he was not a child of great precocity

—in assisting the servants in the household operations they daily conducted. Making beds in the mornings when away from his aunt—for so he called Lady Brooke—occupied much of his attention, as likewise did the drawing of beer for Mr. Brooke's luncheon; and when, about his fifth birthday, the appearance of the twins and the death of Sir Henry Brooke, whom he mourned deeply—why he scarcely knew—gave a different turn to his destinies, he had progressed considerably in the art of cleaning knives and polishing shoes—acquirements which he never lost in after life. But, as we have already said, the birth of his little cousins gave a new direction to his ideas, and Sir Basil's accession to wealth a change to his mode of life.

Immediately on the birth of the little girls, Charlie devoted to their service all his young energies, and by his untutored kindness had on several occasions placed their lives in considerable danger. He had on one occasion given Emmeline a huge piece of wedding-cake, a present from an old nurse, which aliment is not usually thought conducive to the digestion of a sucking baby; and on another occasion,

while Blondelle was cutting her first teeth, he had favoured her with the loan of a small ruler that he was in the habit of using as a walking-stick, which ingenious instrument she strenuously forced too far down her infant throat. It was rumoured in the family, that in an attempt to propel the two from the nursery to the first floor in a wheel-barrow, he had not met with the success he had anticipated; and in his very early school-days, a black mark round Blondelle's eye was the mark of an endeavour on her cousin's part to teach her the manly game of cricket. But though these experiments had not met with the desired luck, they were well intended, and all his actions evinced the kindliness of thought.

Everything he possessed he shared with them. Pictures which had endeared themselves to him in books, torn from their places, adorned the baby house walls, and most of his dogs and geese were torn open to discover the cause of their barking. It is true he did not participate entirely, as he grew a little older, in their religious views; but he sat silently during their infantine lectures, and was once known to have taken Blondelle's part in an animated discussion,

as to whether the dress of the Lord Chancellor at all resembled that of the Unjust Judge. He likewise embodied their ideas of Roman Catholicism, in a due abhorrence of which their aunt and nurse, dear good creatures, had clothed them, by ideal representations of the Pope and his Cardinals, in which His Holiness was represented as an elderly gentleman with a cocked hat and a long nose. This picture he would attack in a violent manner; his Protestantism giving them a high notion of his creed, especially when, with the faint pedantry of boyhood, he wrote round it the device "*Stultus fui.*"

It is needless to recapitulate all the childish relations of the cousins. Suffice it to say, that blessed with imperturbable tempers and affectionate dispositions, they grew together in happiness and love.

With regard to the orphan's treatment and education, consequent on Sir Basil's increase in wealth, these suddenly underwent no slight improvement. Sir Basil, not ill natured when his own interests did not stand between him and his better feelings, which were not so numerous as to be countless, and urged by some representations from his sister-in-law, and cautiously let it be said, from ourselves,

sent the boy to Eton, and subsequently to a foreign university to study languages as a qualification for the diplomatic career. In the holidays and recesses however, he spent his time with the Brookes and the growing girls, during which period the mutual affection between himself and Blondelle, after some slight discussive flirtations on the gentleman's part, assumed rather a different complexion to that which it had hitherto borne. It would be superfluous here to enter into its beginnings and its continuations, its throbbings, its jealousies and its confidences. Wiser and stupider persons than ourselves have experienced them. Lady, we might adduce historical parallels to support the proposition, and when we say they loved, we say all as the Spaniards tell of his mother-land.—Vide the title page of Mr. Ford's Handbook.

They did indeed love, without calculation, and without reservation. Both deep feeling and passionate, they leapt into the gulph, armour and all; head and ears to use a conventional vulgarity. Money, position, all were sacrificed in their minds, and the scruples of the girl alone prevented a clandestine marriage.

Here, Madam, we must advocate principles totally at variance with your opinions of what is

right. A surreptitious marriage in your eyes is little less than bigamy. But why? Do you consider social advantages as the only cause and object in marriage? Do you think as the great Thackeray expresses it, we forget his words, that young lovers must wait till they can give their wives a brougham and a house in Eaton Place? Do you not recollect a passage in a work, the inspiration of which we cannot and will not doubt, that a woman must leave all, her father, mother, &c., and cleave to her husband; and do you in your heart believe that it is the ceremony alone that makes two human beings man and wife?

We do not wish to advocate the principle put forth by Balzac, that overlooking chastity and other little moral obligations, an engagement is to give a man all the rights of marriage; but we do firmly believe that marriages are made in heaven, and if, to use romance words, two young and loving hearts undertake solemnly to abide together for better or for worse, and "reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God, duly considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained," plight

their troth before their great Creator, we, Madam, are fully convinced that such persons are man and wife, and that it is their duty to abandon all until some wise and discreet minister of God's word shall have tied the nuptial knot. Will you contravene what we put forward? Have you seen the result of marriages otherwise solemnized? In your knowledge of society, have you never seen the seventh commandment broken by persons wedded according to the Gallic principle, "*de convenance*?" And can you forget that the awful injunction at your wedding, a ceremony we have never undergone, all but sanctions this infraction of one of the commands of the Decalogue: "For be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow, are not joined together by God; *neither is their matrimony lawful.*" Think of your own early loves Matrons of England, and do not stand out too staunchly for your twelve hundred a year.

CHAPTER IV.

Next turn we to the gay saloon,
Resplendent as a summer noon,
Where 'neath a pendant wreath of lights,
A zodiac of flowers and tapers,

* * * *

Quadrille performs her mazy rites,
And reigns supreme o'er slides and capers,
Working to death each opera strain.

MOORE.

Few earthly things found favour in his sight
Save concubines, and carnal company,
And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.

CHILDE HAROLD.

AGAIN we must mix amongst the gay and
frivolous, though our feelings would lead us
to the humble and sincere.

It is a night of high festival in London, and the talk and papers reek of the doings of the great. You behold us, Madam, again seated by your side, while the merry dance proceeds, and we talk of times long back: of the wits and beauties of our younger days, of Wasabella, Duchess of Dutland, and Emily, Lady Donnybrook, of Rogers, Sheridan, and Luttrell, in their palmiest days, when Byron limped through the saloons, and the now aged matrons were young and beautiful. Our reminiscences may be anachronistic, but our aged memories brook not of dates. We sit by you, dear friend, and moralize. We see the twin beauties of the year, and we canvass those who are past.

Emmeline and Blondelle Brooke have been brought into society. The drawing-room had pronounced them beautiful; and this, believe us, Miss Jones, reading our tale in your provincial parlour, is no mean criterion. When ladies, old and young, appear in the splendour of evening dress while the sun sheds down his searching blaze, the eyes of the least scrutinous can detect faults which only transcendant beauty can obliterate.

The opera also had watched the twins in their effulgence. Ludlam's young man, who has seen the beauties of Germany and France, retired to his black-sheeted bed sleepless ; and that distinguished young barrister, Brittlestone, who revels in third-rate circles, sounded forth their loveliness amidst his rich though vulgar friends. Lady Dunkirk, with her charming little French accent, pronounced them "vairy prettee." The Duchess of Fitz-Charles had also given her "imprimatur;" and the twain were circulated fast. Even that fastidious lady who is seldom pleased, and who deserves endless renown for having stood the fast friend of a poet, on whose head a fickle world had showered unmerited opprobrium, nodded kindly on them as they were presented to her. They had, in fact, pleased the social Nornies, of whose prototypes the Scandinavian poet says :

"They give laws,
They decree life,
To the children of men
They deal out fate."

The Brooke girls had achieved success.

There was an entertainment at the house of Mrs. Darkin, who obeyed, as she invariably does the dictates of the great. F. M. the Duke of Taunton was present, we in our humble capacity had the honour of assisting. Emmeline and Blondelle Brooke made their first appearance in the world ! Think not, however, Madam, that you are to be shocked by a technical account of an obstetric solecism. Such will not be the case ; for the girls, as the Hippodomoioi say, were rising eighteen, when the event occurred, which it is to be hoped you will read. No—there will never be anything in the works of the present writer to “raise a blush on the cheek of the most innocent.” If there is a quality on which we pride ourselves, it is a regard for the innate modesty which characterizes you and your fellow countrywomen. We would do nothing to rub the bloom off that moral peach, your mind, and we feel that any allusion of the kind, though certainly an unhacknied incident to introduce into our pages, might have a baneful effect thereon. No, Madam, the author should ever, at any rate, often sacrifice originality to decorum.



But we will explain our expressions. There is a period in the lives of women which is to them as it were a new existence ; for actual existence is not life, and the introduction into this new existence has often more influence in the finality of life than the first accidents of birth.

A girl is born ; she is tenderly reared by a mother, in this case an aunt has the credit, who watches her every thought, her every action. No stranger is allowed to approach her e'er he has undergone severe scrutiny. No book falls in her way that the watchful friend has not perused, and the mind and beauty of the child grow on in purity. Have you seen a girl before she is what the world, in cant-phraseology calls "out," and seen her after the plunge is taken ? Have you noticed in her the exuberant kindness of her sex, the ignorance of the admiration she creates, the indiscriminate urbanity with which she treats all ? Have you seen her desire to please that you may be gratified, not that you may do her a service ? And have you seen her after the launch has taken place, sophisticated, and how soon mercenary ? Heaven, how is she changed ! The intellectual qualities she before

prized, are contemned for the waltzing of a good dancer ; and real affection is forsaken for the slang half-ribaldry of a rake. Dear, loved friend, do you not recognize the truth of what we advance ? Yes, you, who like the writer, are fast descending in the ravine of years have noticed it. We have seen the two effects. The two paths, the right and the left, the good and bad, the narrow way of eternal life ; the broad way of the span of human existence. Too often the latter.

“ Unless ye be born again,” salvation is not for you ; but in the life of an English lady there is too frequently another birth, a regeneration from the holy to the curst, from light to darkness, a putting off of the new man, a resumption of the old Adam.

It was as has been already stated, a night of high festival in the halls of Darkin. The assemblage was fashionable, and composed of the high priests of *ton* who occasionally, mingle with the herd, but who so seldom admit any into their mystic temples. Madam, we conversed together.

Did we not talk profound philosophy in the

guise of triviality? Did we not observe on seeing a certain gallant colonel, that it was very possible for a guardsman to resemble a shopman in appearance, and also for an authoress to look like a Queen. Many were the sage remarks you made, as we talked, and much information you give us of those that passed.

• “Look at Mrs. Brill,” you said, “covered with diamonds and pearls, which on her dirty skin look like false teeth in a black velvet case. Behold our hostess, her smiles and blandishments on the great! See how she is astonished that Lady Norwood, and then Lord Derven, the statesman, is talking to Mr. Cutts, whom she heretofore looked on as beneath her, Mrs. Darkin’s notice, whom she had not invited, but whom one of her patronesses had brought in her train? Do you watch her demeanor towards him now? She looks at him with kindness.”

We answer “almost with passion.”

“Then do you see that fat woman asleep on a sofa? Oh, the vanity of worldly wishes! She has worked, has struggled to get into society, and when there she sleeps. Has some genius

resolved to show her that the accomplishment of her hopes will not give her joy? Or does she evince a contempt of those who have been her tools and allowed themselves to grant her wishes in return for what she least values—money?”

We whisper, “Perhaps she has drunk too much.” Again look round, you say with the air of a magician, which in fact you are, for your eyes—oh, your eyes, Madam.

“Don’t be a fool,” you suggest, and we endeavour to obey.

And we do look round as you desire, and we see them all heaped together in a dull, though vivid mass—

“Rare beauties, gallant ladies shine.”

We hear the music and the sounds of talking, we smell the fragrance of flowers and perfumes, the buzz of excited voices, the forced happiness of some, the joyousness of others. We see, at a distance, pompous valets administering tea and ice, till such time as supper shall yield more substantial nutriment; the milk, in fact, of the infant ball, which, when it grows older, requires stronger meat. We see pretty maids

whom Mr. Darkin is supposed rather to affect, peeping and envying, and men slyly whispering soft somethings to them ! Some elderly married men doing so surreptitiously, with the fear of their wives before their eyes, and very young men, with an affectation only of mystery, rather desiring to have a character for depravity than otherwise. Mirrors are there in abundance, and of costly price—

“In which he of Gath,
Goliah, might have seen his giant bulk
Whole, without stooping, towering crest and all.”

Jewels of price are there that would have ransomed a king from captivity, and flowers the cost of which would have ransomed families of the poor from starvation. Embroidery is there, and dresses, in the making of which sickly girls, perchance, “cough their own knell,” and with every stitch expend a sigh from the small store of breath that remains to them.

Good heavens ! what misery did we not see beneath the superficial joy ! The mortified girl, whose rival's turn it was to eclipse ; the loving girl, whose lover was not there ; the boy who, led on to love by a flirt, found himself

ridiculed and mocked; the pretty, kind sister who would gladly resign her exorbitant share of partners to the ugly sister, who has none. We see all this, Madam, together, though we give not utterance to our thoughts; and, with a tacit understanding, for a time we sit in silence.

What says the German philosopher? "A person may be frequently solitary without being alone. The mind may be abstracted amidst a numerous assembly, as much withdrawn from every surrounding object, as retired and concentrated in itself—as solitary, in short, as a monk in his cloister, or a hermit in his cave." Have you not felt as we have often felt from our earliest childhood? Some chord has been struck in our minds by an unknown circumstance, bearing an unfathomable relation to the said chord, and surrounded by crowds, by a throng of persons with none of whom sympathy exists, we think of concerns utterly unconnected with them. Ambition, vengeance, hope, grief, joy, contend in our bosom, which a moment before harboured nought beyond the common-place of life. We endeavour to pierce futurity and are not with the present.



Sir Basil and Lady Brooke, and the Miss Brookes are announced..

Mrs. Darkin dissolving in a smirk, compliments Miss Brooke (Emmeline was Miss Brooke by three-quarters of an hour) on her appearance, Miss Blondelle on her hair, and retires to talk of them by their christian names ; and to flirt with Lord Downey, by whose means she wishes to become acquainted with some of his relations.

It was the night of the riding-school scene. Emmeline had wept continuously for several hours, but re-appeared beautiful as ever. A rose she was, and a shower, though it bowed her petals, refreshed her. A dance tune began to sound, and the two girls looked round to see who would fall to their share in the lottery of partners ; even though a girl's affections and thoughts are pre-engaged, she is annoyed if she has not at least the refusal of a dance.

Mrs. Darkin introduced to Lady Brooke Lord Louton and Sir Andrew Diggs. Lady Brooke in turn presented them to her daughters, and they paired off after severe protestations of being each others *vis-à-vis* :

a compact which seemed to us useless, as they were unable to dance in the crowded figure. We watched Blondelle through our glasses, given us in happier days by a being almost as fair as she, and we saw her heart was not with her partner. We watched her well; we saw the beaming eye and the happy flush when a boy about three-and-twenty and still a boy, approached, and we felt she loved the young *attaché*, the pauper Charles Dalrymple. We learnt your secret, Charlie boy. On your old uncle observing in a careless manner, when he took you home in his brougham (jobbed for the season), "What a nice girl Miss Blondelle Brooke appears," you tried to give your "Very" the same easy intonation. You were not expert as the old soldier.

A name sounds through the rooms, and the noise is for a moment hushed. We turn again to you, Madam, for information for we have been out of town some weeks. Lady Newington is speaking to you. We interrupt her. "Do not prevent my talking, pray," she says.

We never attempt impossibilities.

"Sir Guy Trevethen;" is murmured round, and eyes watch him who is coming.

Who has not heard of Sir Guy Trevethen? Have you not heard of the rich, the handsome, and the wild Trevethen? Have you not heard of the fame of that particle of England's gentry? of the splendour of his title which dates from the foundation of his order, so ancient as to have been almost within the memory of our great grandfathers, for the chronicler of the Chancellors tells us that in his childhood he had spoken to a man, who had conversed with a person present at the martyrdom of Charles I.

Have no rumours reached your ears of his childhood;—of his raving father and his suffering mother, whom at thirteen the present Baronet beat and bit so severely that a sturdy butler, in defence of his mistress, was obliged to stun him? Have you never heard of his conduct to the said butler? For, Jackson, you must remember that delicious case which made your eyes twinkle and your mouth water as you held your junior brief at Penloo near his parental domains; and it was stated on oath how he seduced the daughter of the said butler, and how he sent her five pounds to compensate for the loss of her father, who died broken-hearted; for her home which the steward (un-

willing let it be known) seized for rent ; and for the purity which he himself had destroyed. Can you be ignorant of the deeds he has performed to sustain the honour of his race ;—how he employs the wealth gathered by his ancestor the bishop, the renown of his ancestor the warrior, and the probity of his ancestor the judge ?

Hide your diminished head, if to you is unknown : how at Oxford, Trevethen, surrounded by the sycophants whom he employs his wealth in collecting, braved the fury of the cloud-compelling bargeman ; how at Kursaalhausen he broke the banks at Trente-et-quarante and at Roulette the same night ; and how royally he entertained at one and the same time in two villas in the neighbourhood of London, the Italian soprano, and the first representative of the French soubrette. Have not his horses won races ?—Have his tenants not been racked ?—Have not his debts, contracted during his minority, been paid by his mother, still living on a moderate jointure, who will not suffer the name to be disgraced ? And can this be unknown to you, friend Jackson, the orgies at Trevethen Castle, where priests and maidens pure have prayed, and where marshals have

worn their laurels ? The dark, wild, frenzied orgies, when the chapel was changed into a saloon ; the revels, where only a select few were admitted, when, for three days and nights, candles were burning where the altar once had stood, and heaps of cards strewed the floor where worshippers had knelt.

Even the miserable pen with which we write refuses to tell the details that its owner knows ; and there are some who applaud this wild career. Have not his deeds raised his fame in contemporary history ? And do not damsels smile on him, eager to catch the handkerchief that he might cast ? Those few times, Jackson, that, after much canvassing, you have succeeded in attaining isolation, in a London ball-room, have you not seen mothers courting his advances, and drawing forth their daughter's gala-qualities ; and, before your eyes, the mighty of the land have sued for his favour.

Yet there are some who say that chivalry is extinct in Britain.

Ah, dear Madam, let us tell you an observation of ours, on a sentiment that in your charity you have often employed, namely, that we must

expect every young man to sow his wild-oats. Let him do so ; we have been young ourselves, and now are not too apt to be severe. But let the young men beware the oats they sow, for if they do not mix some principle and some honour amidst the grain they often sow dragon's teeth, the fruit of which destroys not only themselves, but those who care for them.

We watched the sisters through the evening, and we stayed later than is our wont, for we felt in them a strong interest. We saw Emmeline's subdued countenance, as she endeavoured so often to throw her sister and her cousin together. As the boy sometimes uttered a slang sally, we caught her eye turning to his with a beaming smile suddenly checked, while her sister directed to him her full large orbs without compunction, and we think that on that occasion we learnt the secrets of the trio.

We observed you, Charlie, dance nearly alternately with the pair, naturally much to the gratification of their mother, and though with Emmeline you were merry in the jovial waltz, with Blondelle you were all but silent in the

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retired quadrille. You also seemed perturbed when any one else danced with her.

Trevethen danced with Miss Blondelle, and made himself agreeable to her after his fashion, much to the astonishment of Mrs. Brill, whose doll-like daughter had not excited in him much devotion. He invited her to visit Trevethen, where he promised her a pleasant party, at the same time informing her that the drawing-room chairs had cost him one hundred pounds a-piece, a fact which, with many others of the same kind, his delicate nature lost no opportunity of blazoning forth to the public. He asked her riddles, the point of which was lost in obscurity; and he also indulged in certain jokes, bearing a double interpretation, the one meaning nothing, the other containing obscenity; and poor Blondelle, absent and understanding nothing, smiled for a civil answer. Her thoughts, poor creature, were away, not far, in a little quadrille that was proceeding noisily in a corner, wherein danced a young diplomatist.

Trevethen held her up afterwards at the Isis Club, as a "charming creature who really understood the art of conversation;" and as his associates, who had experience of his intellectual

qualities, knew the depth of his "powers of mind," the information that Miss Blondelle Brooke appreciated them did not raise her high in their estimation.

The two girls, callous to the admiration they had caused, and the conquests they had achieved, left the ball dispirited; wherefore, who can doubt? But the parents, enchanted at the result, went happy away, and Sir Basil conjuring up a spirit of long neglected and almost forgotten love, tapping his daughters severally on the cheek, playfully said to them: "At any rate, pussies, Gefione will not claim you hereafter."

The two retired to their joint apartment; tired with excitement, and sad in heart they both wept.

"Wherefore weepeth my sister so?" said they to one another. But the answer gave no information, for they sobbed themselves to sleep.

CHAPTER V.

Le regret d'un instant te trouble.

ALFRED DE MUSSET.

THE current of time is flowing fast, and the tale of life flows fast almost as the tale of print. From the ball flew many circumstances before not contemplated ; and the stream of our story gains life from new sources.

Many days had not elapsed after the scene just described, when Sir Guy Trevethen called on Lady Brooke and her daughters. He was arrayed somewhat in the style of an artist, wishing to make himself conspicuous. A low collar and cravat displayed a straggling black beard, and his thickly oiled hair was plas-

tered into unnatural forms round his face. His nether garments, for some reason or other, bore the stamp of a man who affects the study of the kennel, and whose intellectual acquirements carry him no higher than the chase. Not indeed that he excelled in these accomplishments, for his drag was continually upset, and his seat on horseback was not firm, nor, in the absence of this characteristic, did it possess the merit given in similar instance to his own seat by Chateaubriand—grace. Nor, by the way, were these last the only qualities on which Sir Guy treasured himself, though he certainly set store on his mediocrity, for a fawning public attributed to him taste in art, owing to a good collection of pictures that an honest agent had purchased for him, and innocent spinsters seeing him accompanied in his drives by singers of celebrity, fancied, it is said, that music with him was the principal attraction. To carry out this profession, he himself occasionally could be prevailed upon to sing.

Sir Guy, we must repeat for rhetoric's sake, paid a visit one afternoon to Lady Brooke and her daughters, during which he regaled

them with his choice conversation, which no doubt was greatly edifying. At any rate, Lady Brooke must have so considered it, for, talking to her daughters, she was continually recurring to and quoting it, reproving Blondelle for differing with her, and Emmeline for supporting her sister's position. The cultivated minds of the girls soon saw through the baronet's only talent, plausibility; but their mother's baser nature was fascinated, perhaps willingly, by the glitter of the baser metal.

Night after night, the sisters went to some ball or assembly in the gay world. Day after day some breakfast or morning festival invited them, and wherever they went Sir Guy was at their side; Sir Guy, who hitherto had shunned the society of any women but those of a light nature, voting such more respectable company a "horrid bore;" Sir Guy, the reports of whose wild orgies had before rung through the town, suspended them for the time, or at any rate carried them on more quietly. Sir Guy, Mr. Gallipot, the fashionable quack, whispered to the ladies for whom he catered scandal, Sir Guy had dismissed

Madame Douce the actress with a comparatively small pension. Sir Guy had not played so high latterly; in fact, Sir Guy had to impress one of the Miss Brookes, yielded slightly to the rules laid down by society to persons about to marry, and assumed for the nonce a virtue he had not, promising himself ample compensation hereafter.

Sir Guy had determined to wed, and his passions directed him to the family of Brooke. But which of them was his attraction? Some at first said Lady Brooke herself excited his attentions, but this he soon repudiated, and while he parried the jokes his temporary reformation had excited, he had not even himself decided as to which of the two sisters he should give the apple, *i. e.*, himself. Certes, it had excited no discord.

Things, however, soon seemed more decided, for Lady Brooke, it was observed, took every occasion of leaving Blondelle with Sir Guy, who, on his side, had many close conferences with Sir Basil. And the girls began to feel as though some danger was awaiting them; to experience that feeling of despondency that

occasionally, on arising in the morning, awaits one, an undefined sense of undefined grief—a presentiment.

The sisters arose one morning when appearances were no longer doubtful, and when fate seemed decided in Blondelle's *disfavour*. Each sister was determined to unbosom to the other a secret.

Blondelle's secret was her love.

Emmeline's that she had already discovered it. The rest she judiciously suppressed.

Blondelle and Emmeline then mutually shed tears on each others bosoms. A habit common to women at times when they should be thinking of something else, but this being finished, they set their wits to work and Emmeline took the lead.

Mr. Charles Dalrymple for the first time in his life was to be requested to give his advice. He was, therefore, immediately sent for by the instrumentality of a gentleman clad in a red jacket, who was in the habit of loitering near Sir Basil Brooke's house, for the chance of holding the horses of any visitors who might

happen to come thither. The poor girls, their suspicions once roused, dare trust no one, and they began to doubt even the ancient Thomas, a footman long resident in the family, who adored them after the manner of old footmen, and would probably have readily assisted either or both of them in an elopement, or any other delinquency they might have wished to commit.

Between ourselves, Thomas did not look upon Sir Basil and his lady with that deference and respect which a servant ought to feel towards his master and mistress, and love for "his young ladies," superadded to a strong affection for "Mr. Charles" alone prevented his demanding some long arrears of wages due to him, and retiring to the country "along with his old woman." Alone did we say, in this perhaps we are wrong; for Charles has told us that Thomas did not look upon a retirement "along with his old woman" as a peculiarly lively prospect; but in our bounty we have taken the romantic view of the case.

We have not space, however, to tarry long

with the old domestic, so leaving him and his mistresses, we will see where Mr. Charles was and what he was about on the receipt of the letter ; for it would be an injustice to the poor boy to suppose that he on his side had not seen the danger or had taken no steps to avert it. On the contrary, his was the case of Rufus, of whom the poet says :

“*Quicquid agit Rufus, nihil est, nisi Nævia Rufo,
Si gaudet, si flet, si tacet, hanc loquitur ;
Cœnat, propinat, poscit, negat, annuit, una est Nævia.*”

His sense of what was impending, was by far greater than that of his cousins, and having more opportunities than they had of hearing and seeing what was thought and talked with respect to his relatives, he was, by no means, easy in his mind ; nor did he like the prospect of leaving London for his foreign post, while affairs were in such a precarious state.

While musing on his grief, and racking his not over-well supplied store of brains, without hitting on any expedient, he found himself unconsciously at the door of his club, and being

there, he entered to take leave of any casual friends he might there find, as the time for his departure from England was approaching. Sir Guy was likewise there, and the two saluted each other amicably, Sir Guy, for once in his life, acting in good faith for he did not know that he beheld a rival; but Charley, we grieve to say, behaving hypocritically, for while nodding a smiling "how d'ye do?" he muttered words by no means complimentary to the Cornishman.

Dalrymple wandered from room to room of the club, unable to compose himself to any occupation. Conversation with him his friends found utterly impracticable, for he was so absent that his phrases were unmeaning and did not much tend to their hilarity. He could not read. To smoke he was ashamed at so early an hour. He gave himself up to his thoughts but they were not sufficiently profound to interest him; in fact, his mind was unsettled, his feelings were harrassed, and he, for once in his life, found himself in his own way. He would have been delighted had he been able to cut his

own acquaintance, to desire his own absence, and to be obeyed. He was positively disagreeable and odious to himself. He felt himself impertinent to himself, for where he went he found himself following. In fact, he loved Blondelle, he wished to marry her, and he despised himself for not striking out some path by which he could accomplish his object.

Poor fellow!—many persons have found themselves in the same plight, some, who having more brain than Charley, have succeeded either in their wishes or in their attempt to smother them, and others with less who have succumbed to their wishes and been smothered by their failure.

“Ha’ now!” he hears a joyous voice haranguing the idlers in the billiard room. “Naow! me boys!” comes to his ears in genuine Irish brogue, and he recognizes the tones of a distant cousin but near friend, to whom he would e’er this have applied for succour, had he not believed him to be far from London—“at me little place in the contree.”

“Ah, Charlie, me boy, how are ye?” bawled the Milesian, “ye’re just the fella oi want to

see. Oi've sprung such game for ye. Susan Marsden's mother's very ill, and if the ould ladee torrens up her thoes, the gyurrul comes in at wance for the readee, so my de-ar fella—oi've been blarneyin' for ye and tellin her ye're so much in lov' with'or, and she bloshe'd and it's all right. Be Jove, Sir, ye're not the foirst man oi've help'd to a good theeng. Wasn't there Burgho? did'nt oi set it all roight faw'r'um and doesn't he drive a chayot and his cab? And hasn't he a very foine proivate praw-purtee of his own? Begad, Sir, oi'll manage it for ye, as shure as mee name's Harry Connell."

Thus spake the Irishman all in a breath, with a decided wink in his left eye and a voice so loud as to amuse the bystanders, till Charley taking him aside and informing him seriously that he had business of importance to communicate, induced him to end his oration and retire to a private room.

"Well, me dear boy! hwat is it ye want? Are ye hard up? Oi'll lend ye anything to be repaid on your mar'ge. Mind hwat ye're at, yong fellar,—rather than mar-y a gyurrul with

less than thorty thousand phounds, I'd gho to jail, begad, swape the sthrates, I would."

"Do listen while I tell you my story," cried the boy rendered almost frantic by his friend's lucubrations and having obtained a fair hearing, he poured forth earnestly, plainly, and simply the tale of his love, his fortunes, and his fears. Sympathy he knew was secured, and with his naturally impetuous character he deluged forth his most secret thoughts, and without reserve explained the impressions that Lady Brooke's manœuvres had made upon his mind. The wink was still upon the Irishman's eye, but its expression was changed.

"Well, what would you do in such a case, my dear fellow?" said Charley as a peroration.

"Du?" answered his cousin, pronouncing the "u" with somewhat of a French accent and somewhat of a whistle, "du? Begad there's bot wan theengh to du that oi can see. Cot away, elope, mar-y her, and hwen that's don, that aold boffer (Mr. Connell spoke of ourselves in these terms, lady!) that aold boffer will du something mawr for ye. Trost moi worrd for'ut, he will as shure as me name's Harry Connell," an

attestation much affected by Mr. Connell, who had a great fondness for his own cognomen.

"But I've asked her over and over again," rejoined Charley, "and she wont."

"Won't! won't she?" interrupted Mr. Connell; "then if she won't, begad, oi'd make hor. Oi'd ron off with'or wethor she'd loike it or no. Ask hor tu take a walk, put hor in a cab, go tu the station, and she won't refuse ye, as sure as mee name's Harry—"

Here he was interrupted by a waiter, bringing a note directed C. Dalrymple Esq., which that gentleman, when he had read it, immediately placed with his watch in the left-hand pocket of his waistcoat, a proceeding he afterwards designated to Blondelle as "wearing her letter next his heart."

"From hor?" inquired Mr. Connell, as his friend was about to depart.

Dalrymple responded truthfully in the negative, for the note had been written by Emmeline; but Mr. Connell evidently gave no faith to this statement, for resuming the wink of the left eye in its facetious phase, he again reassured his friend that it was all right, and that

Blondelle, if he were firm, would consent to an elopement, at the same time supporting the assurance by assimilating the certitude of her so doing to the well-ascertained fact that his name was Harry Connell

We are assured that the young lover did not lose much time in obeying the summons he had received, and few moments had elapsed ere he was seated in the back drawing-room in the house of Sir Basil Brooke alone with—Emmeline.

We have heard often of devotion amongst men, of commanders resigning cups of water in favour of thirsting soldiery, and other similar acts, but where is there a devotion so self-denying, so holy as that of a woman sacrificing her own affections and prospects, to promote the happiness of those on whom her best feelings have been lavished in vain. And this was the case with Emmeline Brooke.

Charles Dalrymple sat alone with her in the back drawing-room ; the curtains that separated it from the front room were closed, and Charles felt that they alone separated him from the fair Blondelle. He had come full of ardour and

oratory, ready to confront Sir Basil, to pour a confidence into the ear of Emmeline, or his love tale into that of Blondelle, and acting on the advice of Mr. Connell to persuade her to take a step he knew was repugnant to her.

But as his cab approached the house his valour began to desert him. As he knocked, his resolution to beard Sir Basil failed him. As he recognised Blondelle's parasol lying on a hall-chair, where it had been carelessly laid, the discourse he had composed for her benefit had escaped his memory; and now that he was alone with Emmeline, the history of his heart, with which he had intended to favour her, was no longer to be found, and for the first time in his life, since in childhood he had been convicted by her of stealing some of her French plums, he felt confounded and foolish in her presence. Would he laugh, if we exclaimed to the little god who is supposed to rule over the destinies of lovers, with Sir Isaac Newton's address to Diamond, "How little do you know the mischief you have caused?"

Charles Dalrymple and his cousin sat alone,

but, neither spoke a word for some time till at length the girl broke silence. She, like the youth, had composed an address to be spoken on the occasion, in fact, she had, together with her sister, been arranging a plan by which she, Emmeline, was to open the pleadings alone and introduce her sister at the proper moment, but she spoke but one word, and that word like Mademoiselle Rachel's exquisite "Oui" in Adrienne Lecouvreur, said all.

"Blondelle,"—she began; then her voice became inarticulate, and opening the curtains, she brought into the room her blushing sister, herself wisely retiring.

Like the discreet Emmeline, let us also draw the curtains over the first meeting of the lovers.

But for once in a way lovers were prudent, and Blondelle, whispering how good and kind her sister was, and speaking in high terms of her sense, Emmeline was soon called in to take counsel with them as to the appearance of affairs generally in the Brooke household, but more especially as bearing on the individual feelings of the enamoured couple.



Every hint that Lady Brooke had given with regard to Sir Guy Trevethen was canvassed; every action and word of that worthy baronet was discussed. How often he had called; how often he had dined; how often he had been in the library with Sir Basil; how often he had sat alone with my lady. All this and much more was talked of. Everything that had lately occurred was brought to play on the one question, and privately Mr. Dalrymple prided himself more than once on his aptitude for the diplomatic career, as exemplified by the inferences he drew from comparatively trivial premises; inferences between ourselves as illogical, as they were false and unsubstantial.

The three in their eagerness had not heard the door of the front drawing-room stealthily open; neither had they heard a step that fell upon the carpet with a lighter pressure than usual.

Dalrymple had, however, formed his decision, and like other great men lost not a moment in putting it into execution. He knit his brow for a moment as though in thought, then

poured into the ears of his auditors the following untutored lay.

“Emmeline listen, and you Blondelle too. I am sure Emmeline will agree with me. You know Blondelle, I’m very fond of you, there’s not a doubt about it, upon my word there’s not. I’m fonder of you than anybody else in the world, and you say you care for me, and I can’t say that I see your father and mother are behaving uncommon well to you just at present. Therefore,” and here came his consequence, “the best in fact, the only thing to be done is for you Blondelle, dear, to come quietly off with me and marry me, and if you ask Emmeline she will say the same. Come, dear, come,” and he pressed her to him.

Blondelle sobbed as the boy continued his inducements and his arguments. Emmeline’s serious face gave a tacit, but not the less decided encouragement to the plan. Charley was pressing for the declaration in words that boys cannot infer from silence, when a cough was heard in the next room, and ere they had time to move to seats, Sir Basil entered the room. The conversation changed.

Sir Basil took advantage of his position like a man of the world and a statesman. Knowing their conversation, he also knew that their uncertainty as to whether he had heard the last part of it or no would prevent any immediate step from being taken, so evincing no surprise at their emotion, he greeted Charlie kindly, nay affectionately.

"Well, my boy," said the wily Brooke; "I'm very glad to see you before your departure for which I'm very sorry, as seem the girls. But really, Charles, you should not make them cry in this manner, nor seem so down-in-the-mouth at going yourself, you know it's for your good. Come and dine here to-morrow. I'm engaged to-night, and mind you don't draw these tears again, or I'll make them laugh by telling them a story of you at a little cottage in Brompton."

Then nodding a farewell, the honourable and gallant baronet (as he was known in the House of Commons) withdrew, leaving his daughters still in grief, and his nephew dumb-founded at this revelation of a fact which he deemed so private as to be almost secret. How it came

to Sir Basil's knowledge it little matters, but for the sake of our story we must follow our young gentleman's career exclusively for the present, and offer to you, Madam, the only episode our tale will contain.

CHAPTER VI.

Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers.

LONGFELLOW.

It is astonishing how ignorant you, lady, and many of your fair countrywomen must necessarily be of the various classes of society. You probably think that the population of England is composed solely of king, lords and commons, which last division you subdivide into gentry, clergy, tradesmen and the "poorer classes." You probably think that *polite* education descends only to the class below your own, and that within your own circle, exclusively, can men of genius and refined taste find any satisfaction. Though we will not endeavour to depreciate the charms of your society, on which we place

so high a value, if you do hold such an opinion allow us to inform you that you are entirely in the wrong.

In your drives, Madam, in the various outskirts of London you have doubtless observed small detached houses luxuriating under some aristocratic title, such as Clifford Villa, Cavendish Cottage, Seton Lodge. These houses are built in an attractive form, are often possessed of a small conservatory, generally of a garden, and the oriel window, bedecked with choice flowers offers a prospect of comfort and elegance.

Who do you think, lady, lives within these picturesque little houses? Who is it reads the illustrated Byrons, and the gilt "Scott's Complete Works," that lie upon the rosewood tables? Who plays upon the little piano? To whom belong the canary and the piping bullfinch in the fantastic cages? For whom does the chimney smoke and the geranium grow? Is it for one of yourselves, ladies, whose names are daily blazoned by reporters and nightly by butlers? No. Within those small Elizabethan walls dwell women, of fair form, gentle manners, and often of cultivated minds: of

benign dispositions, and kind hearts ; but who from the pressure of circumstances, the infatuated first love of woman, or even the love of conquest have precluded themselves from appearing on equal terms, with those who perhaps only outwardly are their superiors in conduct.

Such were Lais and Aspasia, the counsellors of statesmen, such were Gabrielle d'Estrées, Agnes Sorel, and Madame de Pompadour, though with a more glorious pageantry of vice. Such were Mrs. Elizabeth Killigrew, Mrs. Catherine Peg, Mistress Lucy Walters, Mistress Eleanor Gwynne, and others, ancestresses of our proudest nobility. Such have altered policies and made laws, and such, for a livelihood, have sometimes to bear with the tediousness of those brave defenders of the soil who dwell in the metropolis, or occasionally more fortunate, solace the leisure hours of statesmen and of jurists.

Think us not a libeller. We have seen Privy-Councillors enter the house of courtesans, and some of those who rule the destinies of Britain are not ashamed likewise to be seen in their company.

Many years ago a lady of the class we have

just mentioned took a house in one of the streets leading into Mayfair, living privately, and under the tutelage of a distinguished guardsman, Colonel Trevor.

Her career had not been like that we have lately related, for she had not always occupied a high rank in the "profession;" but from humble origin and low habits had raised herself to the exalted position she then held. The tact of woman had been greatly exemplified in her case, for by contact with gentlemen whom she had met in places of somewhat low resort, and the society of ladies of her own class whom she had met subsequent to her rise in the world, she had acquired the ease of manner and tone of voice and conversation which please men of refinement.

Let it not be thought, however, that these qualities had been obtained without hard study and perseverance. At first she was content to keep silent in society, till she felt herself mistress of those trifles which constitute the harmonious whole. She had been content to be considered stupid and sullen in the midst of gay trivialities, and though the brilliant talents she really pos-

sessed were striving for a vent, she suppressed them till the moment should come when she could display them without any marring vulgarity or exhibition of ignorance.

Day and night when alone, would she thump and labour at her piano, or read works far above my capacity and perhaps, Madam, above yours. She felt her youth, her genius, and she bided her time; but at length the hour arrived for her talents to come forth in their full effulgence. She was invited to dine with a lady, the friend of a brother-officer of her protector. The lady was a stranger to her, and after dinner she sat silent as was her wont, her magnificent form arrayed in the choicest of dresses, but simple and without ornament. Colonel Trevor was standing, near looking at her silently. Already was he beginning unconsciously to tire of her. He had more than once said to himself that beauty was not everything, and that he would like a woman who knew something beyond the art of dressing herself well. Ada divined his thoughts, and she had murmured to herself that ere long he should worship her again, that a net should be drawn around him more strong

than ever, and that if either, she should be in the position to reject, not he. She loved him also. He was a man of talent and of cultivation, and she appreciated both.

Mrs. Darling, the hostess, asked Mrs. Trevor to sing. No one else would have asked the shy, retired woman to sing. No one gave her credit for the power. She was pitied and all but condemned by her friends. Mrs. Darling asked Mrs. Trevor to sing, and Mrs. Trevor rose to comply.

The guardsman trembled, for he feared a failure and an *exposé*. Vain fear! He knew not of his lady's studies and her diligence, neither of her power and her voice. The moment had arrived, and certain of success she sat down to the piano without compunction. She sang, and her position was attained.

"Why did you never sing before, Ada," inquired the Colonel.

"I was never asked," she answered with a smile.

A great writer on morals who happened to be present at the entertainment, led her to her seat amidst the consternation and astonished looks of ladies round, who had before the

performance good-naturedly given significant glances to Mrs. Darling not to expose poor Mrs. Trevor. A humorous writer present pronounced her conversation the best he had ever heard. She talked, and stores of information studiously collected and hoarded, poured forth on the ears of the rapt Trevor and the other male guests. No one thought of the other ladies save one or two young officers of the household troops, a body of men rather distinguished by birth and good-nature than brains and intelligence. A knot of men assembled round her, and she shone. Heavens! What a triumph! And what triumphs awaited her hereafter. Her gifts, her talent were spoken of everywhere. The halls of the high world rang with her charms. Dames of high degree could no longer ignore one of whom all spoke.

When her equipage, artistically modest, appeared in public, men, unabashed, bowed to her, and rode up to greet her. Men against whose name there was not a breath. Ladies whispered to each other and looked at her. Trevor, inspired by her, shone in the senate.

Duchesses would postpone their routs if Ada

gave a reception the same evening. It was useless to compete with her. All the men flocked to her house honoured with an invitation. A triumph! One who lay under a social ban, eclipsed all those who had every worldly advantage, but who could never arise beyond the mediocrity that enshrouds their class. The Pariah had triumphed over the Brahmin.

There is one member of Mrs. Trevor's small but complete establishment whom we have overlooked, an individual who is destined to appear again in these pages, and who exercised no small influence over the life of one at least of our *dramatis personæ*.

Mrs. Trevor, on taking up her residence in Mayfair, had been accompanied by a little girl of about four years of age, her daughter.

Who was the father of the child the public could not say, and envious tongues would whisper that he was not known to any one living, not even to the person who was most likely of any to know. Certes, the baby had been born in the days of Mrs. Trevor's humble estate, when she sat silent and retired in the

dens consecrated to low revels, and was at the bidding of the first comer.

But nevertheless the child was lovely—its beauty as that one sees in a dream. As a child, the glossy, golden hair hung in ringlets round her head, the eye was a dark pensive blue, the brows were dark, the teeth were white and regular, the upper lip short and sharply cut, but full; the blood in the cheek shone through the transparent skin. Never could ought be seen so lovely.

And may we, Madam, enter into the history of the child, and briefly trace her course? May we show you how her mind grew with her form? It shall not be tedious, and perchance it may teach you and others whose soft hearts forgive any crime but one, to look with kinder eyes on even that one fault, and to endeavour to prop the bruised plant tenderly rather than hasten its fall, and then tread it under foot.

The girl was named Mary Archer. Whence the surname who can tell? Thus was she named.

Her early recollections were men with mous-

taches giving her sugar-plums ; men without, whom her mother seemed to regard with deference, playing with her kindly. Ladies, aye, *ladies* speaking to her in her walks, and endeavouring to worm from her secrets of her mother's mode of life. Ladies, not of an exalted rank perhaps, taking her to drive in London, to beautiful places in the country ; her mother also taking her to the sea-side and showing her shells and sea-weeds, and in kindly accents teaching her their classes and their properties.

Then she grew older, and a soft voice taught her to read and write, though the owner of that soft voice could not play the hypocrite and teach her to read aught but books the work of men's hands. And her mother whom she adored with romantic devotion taught her other things. She taught her to draw sweet sounds from instruments, to represent nature on canvass, to speak soft southern tongues, and the child grew, and the mother watched her growth. She was dressed, and fed, and lodged in luxury. Every want was anticipated, for Colonel Trevor, who

loved her, grudged her nothing. She was lovely as she grew. The pensive look had deepened on her face, the skin was still white, the teeth were still regular. The hair had darkened to the glossy brown, and her appearance could only be likened to that of the Madonna

“ La riche Angleterre

Plus d'une fois dans l'eau jettera son filet,
Avant d'y retrouver une perle aussi chère.”

Colonel Trevor died suddenly, when Mary was seventeen, intestate. Her mother, whom the shock nearly annihilated, shortly followed, leaving her all she possessed ; a house, its furniture, and some jewellery. Thus at an early age, was Mary left an orphan and her own mistress. The sale of her mother's effects realized sufficient to give her an annuity of about one hundred a year, a sum less than that which had hitherto been spent on her dress alone. A friend of her mother, also a Pariah, gave her a home, but with the understanding that it was to be only a temporary asylum for her. She was expected to do something for herself.

Her face, that pure angelic face, was to make her livelihood. Alas ! what was she to do ? As a girl, she had been brought up with the same books, had read the same novels, had imbibed the same ideas as the Brahmins of England ; but now that she was grown up, how bitterly was she deceived. Seeva alone was left her. Though fit, she could never shed peace over a home. Even the men on whom her male companions looked upon with contempt, attorneys, surgeons, or first-rate tradesmen would probably have rejected an alliance with her with contumely.

Those visions she had conjured up, like other girls, of love and happiness were torn from her eyes too suddenly, too roughly. She was not even able to give way to her love uncontrolledly. If a man paid her attention and she listened to words that sounded cheerily in her ears, how soon did she discover that the affection proffered was not what she could accept—who could think of offering ought but love *par amours*. She must not yield her virtue, it was daily impressed upon her, save to one who could pay for it. “Non

civis homini continget adire Corinthum" was hourly beaten on her mind. Her poverty in forcing her to sin, precluded her from receiving the palliation of love in her sinning. And as one by one the illusions were dispelled, the poor girl, prospectively penitent, could not but see what in the code of morals lately inculcated to her seemed but just. Her friend could not be expected to provide her for ever with a home. The comforts and luxuries which had become a necessity to her from earliest childhood, could not be procured from the humble pittance left her. Once indeed, she had thought of trying to live on it in misery but in honour; but her ignorance of anything connected with the world precluded her long entertaining this project.

Besides this there was one argument unanswerable by one whose instinct, only, led her to good, whose mind had been cultivated, but not with the cultivation that comes from above. Her mother had so lived—her mother on whom she looked as the perfection of ought human. Her mother whom she had never for a moment ceased to love, had lived for years the avowed

mistress of a man: "And in what am I better than she?" the poor girl said inwardly.

Thus brought up without due abhorrence of this evil—setting this aside a bright vista opening before her—a house of her own such as her mother's and all the delights attainable by wealth at least, what wonder if the girl succumbed; a girl whose sense of right had never been sharpened, who looked upon concubinage as a thing of course. Trusting to luck, she knew not of Providence, that some one she liked might take her with the settlement her friend (Mrs. Darling by the way) should consider sufficient, she informed that lady that she was open to the first eligible person who should present himself.

"That's a good girl," answered Mrs. Darling, and the still innocent Mary was pleased with the praise; yet, poor girl, she repented her misdoings. What she was about to do went against her feelings—not only against her inclinations, but against her sense of right. She knew not why, but it did so. Yet she could not change her determination, and the day of her fall was nigh.

We need not linger on the disgrace of a fellow-creature.

Sir Guy Trevethen presented himself. He consented to all that Mrs. Darling proposed, and amidst every accessory of wealth to soften the sacrifice, Mary yielded up to him her purity, but alas ! for her, not her love.

Mary's life now became that of most other women who have been in a like position. After the first satiety, Sir Guy became cold and colder in his demeanour towards and left her for days and days to her own devices. Then would she seek happiness in excitement. She would give balls to her friends. She would go to balls given by them. Her own talents, great though not so brilliant as those of her mother, insured her agreeable society.

Daily would cabs and broughams be seen at the door of her little cottage at Brompton, and well known faces were often detected, while their owners endeavoured to sit concealed in the back of her box at the opera or a theatre. She seemed likely to rival her mother's fame; but though envied by many, and feared by many, such as old ladies who

occasionally saw their sons hovering in her presence, or younger ladies who detected their husbands furtively glancing at her through their opera-glasses—though in the eyes of her own world she seemed to be wanting in nothing that could make one like her happy, she was not so. Why? Did her life of sin lie heavy on her? We fear not.

In the first flush of luxury, in the first burst of excitement and freedom, we fear sin frightens but few of its votaries. The evil one wraps himself up at first in a garment of alluring shade and colour. It pleases the eye and covers his deformity. But time wears away the cloak. The hem soon becomes frayed, and first of all appears the cloven foot. This first gives the sinner a little compunction. But soon the wool wears more and more. Huge rents tear the cloth still farther, and then he appears in all his monstrous ugliness. Some then avoid him; others throw over him a new cloak of callousness, sometimes of self-righteousness, much more wearing for him, and which enables him to disguise his secret attempts much better, till his victim falls prostrate for ever.

No, Mary had not as yet repented. Her grief was not brought on by remorse. Her mother's example still shone before her, and though without half her mother's ambition, she felt herself rising to her level. But there was one thing wanting to complete her happiness. That one thing which had completed her mother's.

"There is in man's nature a secret inclination and motion towards love," so likewise is there in woman's nature ; and as, with regard to men, the philosopher carries out his saying, this love "if it be not spent upon some one or a few, doth naturally spread itself towards many, and maketh men become humane and charitable as it is seen sometimes in friars," so with women it pours itself in other courses.

Women, very young ones, girls, feel a calling to love, a *besoin d'aimer*, and they must find some object on which to pour out their affections. It is this feeling modified, that causes old, unmarried ladies to take to their hearts dogs, cats, birds and other dumb and unworthy animals ; a characteristic also to be found in ladies of the class we are now canvassing, whose heart is not wrapt up in any one human being.

We cannot say to you with Naso "Vati parete perito," but we can say with him that we are telling you the truth.

Now to return whence we left off, we will repeat that Mary Archer found to her grief that there was one thing wanting to complete her happiness, and that that one thing had not been wanting to her mother. Her mother had loved Colonel Trevor, and he had loved her mother. But there was no love between Mary Archer and her protector, there never could be, for no sympathy existed, and those who have felt like us that sensation of sympathy or antipathy, by which from the first we feel if we shall chime in with the feelings of another or no, will also feel how repugnant it is to live, or be allied, with an *antipathised* person. No—Mary felt no fellow-feeling with regard to Sir Guy. She cared not when he was present, she grieved not when he was absent. But she felt a desire to love and to be beloved, and she also felt that she might gratify that desire.

CHAPTER VII.

*Elige cui dicas 'tu mihi * * places.'*

OID.

WHEN a woman wishes to commit a sin, or even a fault, it is not difficult for her to find an accomplice amongst men, and Mary bent on loving and being beloved, free to choose amongst those who came to her, poor or rich, old or young, need not have waited long for an opportunity of gratifying her inclinations. But her mind possessed a certain instinctive logic, which told her that a simple infidelity to Sir Guy Trevethen did not constitute love, and she was not to be lightly won.

There were many who aspired to her favors. Many who were handsome. Many who were clever, many who were rich. But it was not

for them to gain the prize they coveted. Many smiled knowingly when Mary was spoken of, wishing to convey the idea that they were well with her. The Baron Lebas, before-mentioned, did not hesitate to say that he was “*trrrès bien rreçu par la Arrcherre*,” but he was such a noted liar in matters of the kind that no one believed him, and Mary’s fidelity to Sir Guy was a matter of wonder to all.

The low toadies whom he ever gathered round him, told him that they were not astonished thereat: but to tell the truth he was rather surprised himself at her constancy, and perhaps not best pleased by it. He himself was tired of her. The only motive in possessing himself of her had been gratified, and beyond the notoriety, pleasing to him, of keeping the prettiest woman in London, his sordid nature grudged the large allowance Mrs. Darling had exacted for her ward, and he would willingly have parted from Mary, leaving her the ample pension, which as he now said, he had in a weak moment legally appointed to her. His courage was too low, to tell her he “had no further need of her services” as he once thought of doing.

The fears of such an action being considered heartless prevented him from thus doing, rather than its intrinsic baseness, and his sycophant friends who had undertaken to allow themselves to be surprised in her presence, signally failed in the attempt.

Friend or foe, none had succeeded in making the least impression upon her. They had mistaken her character, and without a proper estimate thereof, Adonis might have sued in vain. Middle aged men, the Sir Basil Brookes and Captain Dightons endeavoured to please her with gross jokes but lightly-veiled, and by softening their wicked old cheeks into amorous leers. Young men consulting old and more experienced lady-killers assuming a light and jovial tone, endeavoured to impress Mary with an idea of their conquests and success, and to show their complete acquaintance with the world by miserable joking. Both plans proved useless.

Poor girl ! Her position was sad. She loathed the obscene conversation of her admirers, and felt that she had deprived herself of the right of checking it. There was but one way of

winning the affections of Mary Archer. The romance of her younger days must be brought into play. She was to be wooed and won ; but the wooing must be real wooing by which the winning was to be accomplished. She had planned it all in her mind.

A young man was to appear—was to throw himself as a slave at her feet. He was to watch her windows at night, after having pressed her hand timorously in the dance. He was to sit and sigh by her side not daring to speak. To write ardent notes from a distance, but to feel frightened in her presence. He was also to express his passion by means of flowers and other tokens ; to make and repeat poetry to her in which she should, indirectly but plainly be the heroine ; and religiously to preserve a glove, sandal or other token which she would carefully as though by accident, drop in his way

At length she was to give him an opportunity of declaring his passion. She should sit with him some summer twilight in her little conservatory, the nearest approach to a bower she could find. Cape jasmine and passion-flower should hang over them. Wine, fruit and

flowers should be near them untouched : and they should together watch the red sun sinking into the western wave—a phrase she had read somewhere.

Then the stars should one by one burst forth in the night, and a pale moon shed its light through the trellis-work and creepers : and then their hands should meet, and the youth should pour into her ear “a passionate flood of words :” should narrate the beginning and continuation of his love up to that moment; should display the glove and sandal, dirty from much wearing—should tell her where he found them ; and she should appear unconscious of having lost them though they were thrown purposely in his way. Gradually his arm should steal around her and press her to his heart and their lips should meet, and her head should fall upon his shoulder, and she should give herself up to him wholly and entirely.

Her exemption from social ties should stand her in good stead. The first passionate avowal should be responded to by words as passionate. No cold, parental proviso should mar the welling happiness. She should be his, his

entirely, to do his behests, to obey his slightest wish ; then, then she felt she should feel blessed by her freedom from the buckram and trammels of the world. No frigid arrangements should intervene between the declaration and the consummation. Soul and body she would be his, who would take the course she had marked out. She did not look beyond that moment of delirious joy. It was the prospect of that moment, that was the one bright spot to look forward in her future. It was lucky for her, that her views were not made known to any of the experienced dissemblers who surrounded her.

We have seen how Mary Archer was to be won. What chance, therefore, had old satyrs with grown-up children like Sir Basil Brooke and Captain Dighton in the race?

Men of the world, indeed, of seven or eight-and-twenty, might have had some little likelihood of success in pursuing the plan already indicated ; but gouty sinners would they not have created ridicule, by picking up tulips and camelias, or spouting Byron to a girl of seventeen. No, it was not for the professed lovers, for the Automedons and Tiphyses of

love to wear the colours of Mary Archer, but it was for one whom they would have contemned as a rival, had it been known that he had entered for the prize.

One Mr. Charles Dalrymple had arrived in London at the beginning of one August, as he stated, on business. What the business could be that had brought him to the metropolis none could imagine, but there he certainly was, living in the ground-floor of Sir Basil Brooke's house during that worthy gentleman's absence abroad with his family. Captain Dighton, an old seaman, possessed of much land and but little morality, meeting Mr. Dalrymple in St. James' Street one morning, invited him to dine at Greenwich with himself and two ladies. The young *attaché*, delighted at being taken into partnership by a man whose exploits had rendered him famous, readily accepted the offer. He dined with Captain Dighton, meeting Mary Archer and another lady who shall be nameless.

It is a strange statement we are about to make, but one which we have found true in our experience. An elderly man, who has not abandoned follies, and who still aspires to

success in gaining the affections of women, should he fail in making an impression on any one in particular, generally endeavours to set on some young man to gain the victory he himself cannot obtain. He makes himself the confidant of the youth whom he has edged on to the attempt, and perhaps he rejoices in being the recipient of his fears, aspirations and doubts; and thus enjoys, second-hand, the "soft pains and troubles" which he can no longer expect to feel in his own person.

It was on this account, we believe, that Captain Dighton asked Charley Dalrymple to meet the fair Mrs. Trevethen, for thus was she now called. If such were his object it succeeded partly, for Mr. Dalrymple, whose love for Blondelle had not at that time fully declared itself, fell very much in love with the little Archer.

Captain Dighton, however, profited no further by his move, for the youth was not one of those who confided in every new-comer. He wrapped his passion in his breast, and pursued plans he himself formed. It was lucky for him perhaps that he did so, if success

in such undertaking can be so called, for had he confided in the hardened Dighton and followed his advice, he would have spoiled any chance he may originally have had.

Dighton would have counselled the generally successful plan of boldness. A *coup de main* Dighton used to say was infallible. No woman could resist it. But Dighton was wrong, and Dighton, like most Free-traders, ignored the experience that told against his propositions.

Dalrymple's plans were dictated not by his head, but his heart. He really felt a fondness for Mary Archer—not the settled, unchanging fondness he afterwards felt for Blondelle—but a passionate desire to be loved by her, to see her constantly, to live with her. He entertained that love which ever dies when gratified. His love was also infused with respect for its object, and he paid court to Mary as he would have done to any lady however high-born. This was all the poor girl wanted; for had she been able to resolve into one phrase the plans we have latterly described, she would have said, "I want the man who says he loves me, before I believe him, to treat me as he would treat a lady."

And these were the tactics into which Dalrymple's feelings naturally led him. He made downright earnest love to her. A close observer might easily have seen the various symptoms as they gradually developed. Shelley might be seen adorning his writing-table. He also ran to great extravagance in seals, that he might express his feelings to his love in a delicate manner. Every tongue was ransacked for a motto: *Semper fidelis*, *Tout à toi*, *A Siempre*, *Eterna fede*, *Immer Treu*, were engraved on cornelians for him, and not content with this he dived into unknown tongues, and routed up learned friends from the Museum to translate his constancy into terse and concise Malay, and condensed tenderness into epigrammatic Sanscrit.

He worked out Miss Mary's plan with greater detail, than she could have herself contemplated. He might have been seen daily with her tending flowers in the garden, bending with her over a geranium to let her ringlets touch his cheek, watering a fuchsia, or mourning with her over the too early fading of a favourite verbena; and willingly she listened as he mentioned

the fact of "his never having loved a tree or flower" without funebral consequences. His manners, as we have before mentioned, were charming and always childlike, and as he sang to her respecting the vale of Avoca and of "vesper sighs," she felt the happiness she had anticipated dawning on her.

Moreover, in his blotting-book might have been discovered various sheets of paper, disfigured by odd lines intended to form parts of sonnets to her beauty, few of which, we fear, came to a happy conclusion. The only poem we can find was one, to the composition of which, we fear, several authors of eminence must have contributed. It began, we recollect, "Thine eyes blue tenderness, thy long fair hair" and concluded with some other soft but by no means original allusion.

Mr. Dalrymple also, after much study, succeeded in committing to a not over-tenacious memory, some lines touching his "passion for the name of Mary," which he introduced on being asked which was his favourite passage in "Don Juan," though (we must reveal his dishonesty) he had never read that work thoroughly, and knew no other stanza in it.

In fact, after a short time, he had answered the most sanguine expectations of the young lady, and she was prepared to grant him all he should ask.

It was a bright day at the commencement of autumn, and Mary had been sailing gently down the Thames with her young lover. They had walked home together arm in arm as the sun was descending, and they both felt the crisis was arrived. Arrived at the cottage, they found a dinner awaiting, of which, though cooked in the most approved style and served up with every concomitant luxury, they partook but slightly.

As though by an agreement, they both rose after the repast and adjourned to the little conservatory. There was the cape jasmine and the passion flower ; the rich fruit lay on the table, and Eastern confectionary, but nought was tasted beyond the few glasses of wine that Charley occasionally took to keep up his courage till it should carry him to his declaration. " Si jeunesse savait," how little time would be lost !

They sat side by side and spoke not. The sun sank lower and lower, the stars and the

pale moon shone in its stead, but neither spoke a word. They sat and gazed together on the distant river, and sat in silence. The boy, inwardly cursing his bashfulness, could not summon up courage to say a word; but they both felt happy.

The stars and moon had for some time maintained their position. The youth extended his hand, and allowed it carelessly to hang on the back of his companion's chair. By a half-involuntary, half-designed action, she leant back, and the hand touched the ivory neck. Swift as lightning it passed round her waist; it pressed her to him, and in inarticulate sounds he gasped forth his feelings. The dream was embodied, the moment had come—and Charley had fulfilled the part allotted to him to a letter. Mary's head sank upon his shoulder, her eyes gazed into his,

“And their spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips.”

The alliance thus established lasted some time, full of quarrels was it, but still of hap-

piness. Mary was not jealous a bit more than her lover liked, and Sir Guy with his many occupations with Madame Douce and amidst opera-dancers and the like, importuned them but little with his presence. He suspected something, certainly, but Charley took precautions, and as the young lady's servants loved him better than the man whose money paid them, they did not consider it expedient to reveal to the latter ought that might come under their notice.

But Mary Archer loved truly, and she was not one of those who think to prove their affection by monopolising the time and society of the object thereof. She forced him to seek the acquaintances she considered would promote his worldly prospects, and in every respect her conduct showed her capable of sacrifices: how we must shortly sketch.

The relations of amity between Mary and the young diplomat had subsisted some time, when events occurred which altered the whole tenor of their lives. Dalrymple had been absent in the country for some time, and on his return found himself in the disagreeable predicament, that he loved two persons at the same moment.

For he adored Blondelle certainly, and he also loved his little Mary. You, Miss Jones, reading this may doubt us. You may say "that but one passion of love can exist in the mind," and women, dear good creatures no doubt believe this to be the case. They have no knowledge of the double organization, which forms the mind of man.

Dalrymple loved Blondelle, loved her truly, deeply, sincerely, purely. He also loved Mary truly, deeply, and sincerely, but the fourth quality was wanting; and it was the absence of this quality that rendered the co-existence of the two loves possible. It severed them with a hard line. The one was a love of the mind, the other an animal passion, and though this latter had from the foundation of the masculine mind persuaded itself into thinking itself also spiritual, enough of the earth still remained to give it a decided characteristic, a nature that separated it from from the higher affection as decidedly as water is separate from land.

But here again, a second time in the course of our story, a poor girl is to suffer for her loving, and the truth of our tale prevents us

from introducing any novel incident. The picture that revealed to Emmeline the secret of Dalrymple's love had revealed it to Mary Archer months before.

What was the course that the girl pursued? Do you think, Madam, that the kindly nature of your sex ever differs? Do you think that those who have fallen feel differently from those who have not? If you do, you wrong them; for as Mr. Mungo Park found kindness from the poor African woman, as pure as that of a Russian princess, so a woman of true womanly nature will act in the same manner towards him she loves, be she the greatest duchess or the poorest outcast of the street.

What then was Mary Archer's conduct on discovering that she no longer held the undivided affections of Charles Dalrymple? She made no scene; she did not weep in his presence or reproach him. She made indirect inquiries as to the prospects of his relatives, for she had recognised the likeness, having once seen Dalrymple with Blondelle in public. She heard that eventually the Miss Brookes would have money, that their father had influence and

friends, and she determined to leave no stone unturned until *her* lover should be the husband of the other woman that he loved.

And one morning she told him this: she told it him with a quivering voice, a moist eye, but a smiling lip. She bade him always consider her as his friend, his counsellor, as his true, devoted friend, but never more in the light he had hitherto regarded her. She told him that a woman could best counsel in affairs of love, and that he *must* consult her in this one. And gradually her strong will led the ductile boy to her way of thinking, and almost daily he visited her and asked her advice on some matter relating to his love, or to any other of his private circumstances. No secret was unrevealed to her: and she was indeed a friend.

One day he had by accident dropped an open letter in her room on leaving it. It was a peremptory demand for a considerable sum of money, and he was hastening to procure it at usury. Having obtained it he proceeded to the bank into which he was to pay it, and found that the debt had already been discharged.

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Who had paid it? The clerk, grinning, described a lady who had brought the amount, her attire, and her carriage. It was Mary, and having first denied the fact in tears, she took the money from the boy.

Was Dalrymple then wrong in confiding in this woman? No, dear Madam, with all your high moral notions and strict sentiments, you cannot say he was. We will not defy you to say so, for it would be rude to defy a lady; but we repeat, that, had he not behaved kindly to her, you would have condemned him and probably considered him "a beast!"

It was Mary Archer therefore that Sir Basil generously held over the young man's head; and strange to say, it was to Mary Archer that Charles flew in this difficulty.

We will see the result in another chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

J'ai encore un projet, ô nymphe, que je tremble de vous avouer ; mais puisque vous lisez dans mon âme, vous pardonnerez sans doute au motif si pur qui m'anime, au sentiment douloureux et tendre qui m'inspire ce dessein.

FLORIAN.

MR. DALRYMPLE on leaving his uncle's house, drove as quickly as he could to Mary's cottage. He felt a burden he wished to be relieved, and she alone could assist in removing it. But as he approached her house he felt the difficulty of consulting her. How could he disclose to her that his acquaintance with her, was the secret by which Sir Basil Brooke held him in thrall ? How could he tell her that he was afraid, ashamed of her ? And yet every

step that his cab-horse took, made him feel that to announce this fact was the only object of his visit. He turned it over in his mind repeatedly, but without any gratifying result, and as the cab drove away, satisfied—*mirabile dictu*—with the fare given him, and as he rang at the little bell of the covered way that led from the garden gate to the house, his mind misgave him, and he felt very uneasy.

Mary was sitting alone as he entered, and she returned the kiss, to which their mutual affection was now restricted, with a smiling face, though but a short time previously her recollections had caused her almost to weep. Sitting side by side near the window, they both for sometime were silent, Charles not knowing how to open the subject, Mary expecting to hear the purport of her guest's visit. At length the boy having mustered up courage, lays before his companion his "given case." He tells of Sir Guy's persecution, and of the girl's abhorrence, in which Mary for a second time agrees with Blondelle—as well as of the part taken by Sir Basil and his lady in the proceedings. Then tremblingly he narrates the whole

of the circumstances which you already know, and awaits her answer.

A woman instinctively flies to a right conclusion. Without an atom of reasoning power she forms her judgement, and is content to abide by it. Why is she so content? Because she is so, is her answer. "How do you know that what you do is right?" one may ask. "Because it is," she will tell you in reply. Her natural good feeling without any process of reasoning brings her to the same point to which a man would arrive after much thought and painful argument. Having consequently arrived quickest at this position, she loses her advantage. She is there because she is there; she knows not why, but there she is. A man is also there, but he will maintain his right to be there with impregnable strength, where as a woman must easily be dispossessed. An appeal to her feelings with her, is the strongest argument, and this is the weapon man rises against her; but man is invulnerable by this weapon, and woman does not possess the arm that will hurt him, namely, reasoning.

Thus therefore, intellectually man is stronger

than woman ; but united they are invincible. Add a woman's tact to a man's mind, and you can overcome the world.

If you can find a true woman, ever trust her opinion. Take that as the spot to which you must ultimately arrive, and with that in view, work your way to it through hard logic and severe analysis. Then you cannot be wrong.

Thus did Mary quickly hit upon the best plan for her quondam lover to pursue, under the disagreeable circumstances in which he found himself.

"Charlie," she said to him, "it appears to me there is but one thing to be done. You must go straight to your cousin and tell her everything." This she said without faltering, though the pang it cost her was great.

It was bitter that her name should be mentioned for the first time to Blondelle, whom, with every effort to the contrary, she could not but help regarding as her rival, as one who had been sacrificed for her. It was hard to think that her rival should hear that, without exertion, unknowingly, she, the rival, had gained a victory ; that there was one captive, at least,

to deck her triumph, a willing captive, indeed, but still a captive. But how fearful was it to reflect, with what horror Blondelle would probably look on her. How would Blondelle, the virtuous, the pure, contemplate one who had committed crimes almost unknown to her?

Would Blondelle pity her, and generously forgive her faults in consideration of her love, her sacrifices; or would she only forgive the sinning lover, and consider with contempt that the sinning woman was only sufficiently punished for her sin, and that nothing she could do would be sufficient atonement? She felt, poor girl, as others have felt, but as few have said, that the sin lies ever with the woman. Eve's crime has followed her peculiar descendants, and woman always bears the heavier blame, the harder punishment.

But Mary did not shrink from her task. "*Il y a une certaine sorte d'amour dont l'excès empêche la jalousie,*" and Mary's love had been so purified and refined, that she not only felt no jealousy, but at the same time, no feeling that could restrain her from any self-sacrifice. She brought the few arguments a woman is capable

of, to support her thesis, and by dint of prayers tears and looks, she induced Dalrymple to make the necessary revelations to his cousin, so that any report to his detriment might not come upon her unexpectedly and unanswered.

With this determination, Charles Dalrymple left the cottage, and returned to his own lodgings, desolate and dispirited.

On his way thither he had anticipated evil. A heavy feeling came over him, oppressing as the London fog that darkened the streets as he approached his abode, and he entered his house, certain that the news of some dire disaster waited him. He felt as if rushing to his fate as he ran upstairs to his sitting-room on the second floor. Several notes and letters were lying on the table. One was in the hand of Emmeline, one was marked "immediate," and in an unknown and ill-regulated hand. But, strange to say, he did not read those two immediately? No. He gave himself torture, for it seemed a kind of satisfaction to him. He voluntarily kept himself in suspense with savage pleasure, and having read two or three invitations to dinner, placed two or three cards in his

looking-glass, and combed his hair and incipient whiskers, he proceeded to open the epistle with the straggling characters. He would infinitely rather have read the letter addressed in his cousin's handwriting, but his grim humour led him to postpone it to the last.

Good heavens! what does he read? His step-father has died suddenly at Malta, on his way from India, and his mother a second time a widow, too ill and weak to write herself, requests his speedy presence.

What fearful coincidence!

His mother dying, perhaps, and alone in a distant spot, demands his attendance. Filial duty and affection brook no delay, for though the young man had not seen his mother for years, he ever held her in tender remembrance. His love, in England, is menaced with danger. But little doubt is left on his mind that Sir Basil and his worldly wife will, by every argument, induce their daughter to marry Sir Guy Trevethen, and he knows her yielding temper and disposition too well, to hope that, unsupported by his presence, she will be able to resist their united voices.

The other note partly reassures him. It is, as we have already said, from Emmeline. There is no need for immediate steps. She and her family are to leave town for a few days. The reprieve was but slight, yet he clings to it desperately; no time is to be lost. He goes to his banker's for funds, he calls at Sir Basil's, but the young ladies are out. He has not time to call again; but from his home he writes a few lines breathing his devotion and showing the reason for his sudden departure. He is sure Blondelle will see its force. She is not selfish, and would not keep a son from his mother, probably at her last extremity. He bids her trust in the truth of his affection, despite anything that may be said against him. He throws a few clothes into a portmanteau, and the rail is bearing him far away from his love and from his doubts. He is hastening day and night to Marseilles, to catch the Malta packet.

His letter was not delivered. Sir Basil intercepted it and burnt it. That evening another letter was left at the door of Charlie's lodgings by the gentleman in red. It was an earnest request for his immediate presence.

It was true, the note went on to say, that his love and hers' were to leave London, but Sir Guy Trevethen was to be of their party. He was, then in conversation with Sir Basil. Speed was everything.

That letter was given to the person, for whom it was intended, weeks afterwards, when it was too late.

CHAPTER IX.

“Aye me!” sayd then Serena, sighing sore,
“What hope of helpe doth then for us remaine?”

THE FAERIE QUEENE.

THE evening had long passed, and it was near midnight, yet the two baronets were still in conversation over their wine. Lady Brooke told her daughters it was time for them to seek their beds, as they would have to be up betimes the following morning, and obeying her wishes, they retired.

Now Lady Brooke orders her maid to bring her slippers and a glass of wine and water, and subsequently desires her to go to bed herself, as she would also have to rise early in the morning—a mark of consideration on the part of her

mistress which much astonished, while it did not deceive, the waiting-woman. Lady Brooke having then retired to her husband's dressing-room with a novel and a nightcap, sat herself down as though to wait the coming of her lord.

Her maid, wishing her good-night, withdrew to canvass with Sir Basil's under-butler and valet, the strange occurrence of her mistress' good-nature.

"She don't care for me, she don't," said the exemplary female. "'Go to bed,' says she, 'go to bed, Trimmer; I shan't want you hany more to-night, and you will 'ave to get hup very hearly to-morrer mornin'.' Hearly, indeed!" continued the indignant Abigail, "hearly!" and she laid great emphasis on the word; "and 'avn't I to get up hearly every mornin', and don't she keep me hup late hevery night? But," and the woman jumped to her conclusion, "there's somethin' in it, and I'm determined to find it out." And Mr. Deffil, the valet, having applauded and encouraged her in her resolution, she at once betook herself to work it out.

The house was very quiet indeed, save that a low, mumbling sound of voices proceeded from the dining-room. All the servants had betaken themselves to bed, with the exception of Mr. Deffil and Mrs. Trimmer, when Lady Brooke, habited in a white wrapper, and wearing on her feet soft velvet slippers, gently opened the door of her husband's dressing-room, which looked upon the staircase. The click of the latch resounded through the silence, and the house returned a hollow echo which my lady flattered herself was heard by herself alone. Such, however, was not the case, for Mrs. Trimmer, enveloped in a fur cloak of her mistress, was sitting in a dark corner of the drawing-room, with her auricular organs distended to catch the slightest sound, and her full maid-servant's power of hearing brought into play.

Now Mrs. Trimmer, in taking up her position in the drawing-room, had shown consummate generalship. In the first place, having settled in her own mind that "somethin' was hup," to discover what was "hup" she had calculated the best means of so doing.

Her having been ordered to her attic, showed plainly that the thing was to be "hup" immediately, that very night, and she decided on the drawing-room as the best place in which to pursue her discoveries. It was, as it were, nearly in the centre of the house, at least about half way between the kitchen and the roof. In the stillness of the night a sound from above or below might be heard in the drawing-room, and no one could ascend or descend the stairs without the knowledge of that apartment. Consequently, in this Mrs. Trimmer showed one of those qualities that mark a great soldier—choice of position.

In the second place, many other calculations mingled, induced Mrs. Trimmer to seek the drawing-room. The law of chances was brought into play. The fire was out, and Lady Brooke was not likely again to enter the apartment. She was not likely to suspect her maid, who she probably thought was glad to get to bed, of occupying the seat of her dignity, and thus had Mrs. Trimmer dug her trenches in a good spot, whence she could spy and observe, and firing off her glances and her spiteful thoughts,

discover the plans of Lady Brooke, whom she ever regarded as an enemy, without subjecting herself to detection. Thus again was Mrs. Trimmer a good general, and the issue proved this fact beyond denial.

Let us return from maid to mistress, from the first to the second floor, and observe what Lady Brooke is about. The door of the dressing-room opened with a click, and revealed her Ladyship. As Lady Brooke stood and watched, Mrs. Trimmer felt that her mistress was listening ready to catch the slightest sound, and nearly smothered herself in stifling an intrusive sneeze.

Slowly did Lady Brooke descend the carpeted stair, candle in hand. Nothing could be heard but the rustle of her drapery, as it followed her down the steps. Once or twice the good dame paused to hear if the conversation in the dining-room still continued, and being reassured by hearing the poking of the fire, she continued her march. Down, down she came, and her copious robes followed her, and as she passed the door of the room in which Mrs. Trimmer sat listening, that lady's heart "beat quite

hateful," as she afterwards told Mr. Deffil. "My Lady looked quite wicked, as she went down, like a bad sperrit."

Down went my Lady, and down the staircase which widened as it led her from the first floor to the basement, and slowly went she with her raiment, until she reached the door of the apartment in which her husband and her future son-in-law were sitting. As she approached, the voices that had previously been heard were raised loud and louder, and though there was nothing decidedly angry in them, they did not sound very cordial.

She stood by the door and listened, and Mrs. Trimmer coaxed her neck over the bannisters endeavouring, not quite in vain, to catch the words; but Lady Brooke heard them plainly, she drank them in every word and she felt glad at their purports.

Shall we tell what they were, Madam? Yes, we think we may. We will once in our lives turn eaves-dropper, for some day or other you must know what that conversation was.

The topic was Blondelle, and when Lady

Brooke reached the door, it was her husband who was speaking. She knew at once the high-pitched, conceited voice, as he held forth to his companion.

"My dear Guy, the fact is, that I can't—force the girl's—feelings. You shall come with us—to-morrow, and speak to her as you like—but—if she does not like you—au-d'ammee! Why you know I can't make her. She—silly child—is spoony, I think, on that cousin of her's, Dalrymple—he, I believe, is spoony on her."

"Very spoony, as you call it," burst in the other, almost forgetting his usual affected drawl and pedantry, "very spoony. Why, as I went to-day to see little Mary, whom you know, to break off with her, who should be coming out of her house but 'that cousin of her's.' Pauline Journet, who lives quite near, tells me he has been there every day for a very long time. Tell Miss Blondelle this, and see if she will continue to be spoony on the young rip."

Sir Basil knew all this already, but he still had some feeling of delicacy, and would not needlessly hurt his daughter's feelings either by an allusion of the kind, nor by mentioning her

cousin's apparent infidelity. It is true he had threatened it, but his threats were merely threats, and rarely carried into execution. Lady Brooke, however, received the information with pleasure, and without much natural delicacy in her moral conformation, determined to make use of it on the first occasion. She had no time, however, to think of her projects, for Sir Basil resumed the debate.

"Well, my dear Guy. Dalrymple or no Dalrymple—I can't force the girl to like you if she doesn't. If she does, well and good, I shall be delighted. If not—"

"If not, my dear Brooke," drawled out the other member of the honourable order, as he passed his well-bejewelled fingers through his well-macassered hair "if not I see but one resource," and he waited expecting a reply;—but the senior was silent.

"I see but one resource; she *must*," said the amiable young man. "It comes to this," continued he, for, having made up his mind to any particular object, he did not care much for the means by which it was obtained. "It comes to this. One way and the other, you

have run up your little account with me to sixteen or seventeen thousand — not that I grudge it you, my dear fellow ; but you know, the richest man would feel a sum of that kind. Well, this sixteen or seventeen thousand might go towards buying your daughter's *trousseau*, with a few thousand more, that would perhaps pay some other bills as well ; but," and this amiable and ingenuous creature again arranged his oily locks, "if, you know, the young lady refuses me, why, you perceive—miserable, and so on—I shall be obliged to do the proper thing—apply the usual salve to a heart made desolate—go abroad—yacht, you see. And, the expenses of a tour being very great, I must get you to assist me by returning me a little of that sum."*

Lady Brooke, as she heard this, applauded inwardly Sir Guy's resolution. His course was similar to that she would have pursued had she been similarly circumstanced, and she welcomed her future son-in-law as a kindred spirit.

Oh, womankind ! womankind ! true it is that when pain and anguish wring the brow

* See Note A, at the end.

you're all that can be desired, that is to say, if you are not an exception to the rule; but if you are an exception, if unfortunately you are at all tigrish, then indeed but one simile could describe you, and that simile is unfit for ears polite.

And you felt that you were an exception to your sex, Lady Brooke. You entertained few of their feelings save the worst of them, and you felt proud of the exemption, and considered yourself above them. You know you did; and looking at your children, you wondered how you, a wicked old turkey, could have given life to such little, gentle, confiding, timid birds as those which called you mother.

Yes, you applauded Sir Guy Trevethen's resolution. But Sir Basil did not. He could not, circumstanced as he was, express his contempt for a man who could conceive such a device. Yet he felt that he, bad as he was, would never have acted thus. Nevertheless, he gave himself but little trouble. Burdened and weighed down by his sins, debts, and weaknesses, he referred Sir Guy to Lady Brooke, who, on hearing her name, retreated to her

chamber much more rapidly than she had left it. Sir Basil found her there not long afterwards, dozing over a book and a nearly extinct fire.

“Guy wants to see you,” said her husband; and again descending the stairs, she had a long and animated conference with her would-be son-in-law. What it was has never transpired. Mrs. Trimmer alone heard it, and while it is proceeding let us turn to some others of our acquaintances.

The sisters were in their rooms up-stairs, which, as we have before said, they occupied jointly, not that there was any need for their so doing on account of space; but as they grew in life they preferred the method of living, which they had pursued from their earliest childhood; a more happy, but Heaven knows, not a more innocent period of their lives.

They have retired to their room and they know Sir Guy is still in the house. They sit and listen to hear if he is gone; but the chains and bars of the street-door have not yet clanged with their usual sound, and for some hours they sit expectant. Blondelle's large dark eyes are

heavy and tired with watching and weeping, and her sister at last prevails upon her to take the rest she evidently requires. Emmeline however, still sits and watches, and hours after her sister's soft breathing and occasional murmurings show that she is in the land of dreams, she sits, still holding in her hand a book. Poor self-deception. She turns the leaves one by one, but she hardly knows the title of the work she is perusing.

And of what is she thinking ?

She can hardly be thinking of her love, for have we not seen how she has completely abandoned it, and how she has entered heart and soul into every plan for promoting her sister's happiness. If we judge by that criterion, however, we little understand a woman's feelings ; how, in her self-denial, while she is exercising it in its full activity, she can not only forget but ignore her feelings and her entity. But when the breast-plate and helmet are doffed, and the armour is laid aside for the night, then her wounds smart, her bruises tingle, and though unswerving in the performance of her duties she then feels their irksomeness.

Let us try therefore to trace the workings of

Emmeline's mind as she is bending over the novel that she holds in her hand. She is recalling the origin, the cause, of her affection for her cousin ; and she remembers many things that justify it, for the best of women does not like to feel she has loved without some reason for so doing afforded by its object, more especially when she finds, as in this case, that her love is expended uselessly.

Emmeline rapidly reviews the principal circumstances of her life in relation to that of her cousin. She recollects that he had sat with her through her illnesses ;—had tended her through scarlet-fever when her father and mother left the house that they might not be thrown into quarantine. He had run through pouring rains to execute her commissions. He had given up agreeable parties for her. In fact he had done so many things for her sake that she felt quite justified in loving him. Besides all this she had probably saved his life at the riding-school, which was a conclusive argument in favour of her right to adore him, if she thought proper so to do, and in her soul she felt that she did love him.

But it was not what he had done for you, young lady, that gave you those feelings. Others might have done the same and in vain. Others might have watched your bed of sickness, and have plunged through puddles for you with equal devotion, and you would not have loved them. No, it was that manner which he possessed, that soft, simple, childlike manner which had worked its way like a screw into your affections. And the screw was well fixed. Your affections are of hard, durable material. You will not find it easy to turn those threads back, and every twist of the turnscrew, Resolution, will give you a sharp pang. And Emmeline felt this. She had already handled the instrument, and the twitch it gave her was hard to bear.

Then she shook her curls, and laid her book upon her lap, and said to herself "Yes I do love him," and she plunged the probe so deep that the iron entered into her soul. She sifted her feelings with power extraordinary for so young a girl. She had been a spendthrift of affection, and she had given to her conscience an account, in which she had, unlike most

persons, calculating their debts, omitted no item. This still is not sufficient. She acknowledges her past love, but can she resist loving for the future? Can she root out Mr. Charles Dalrymple from her heart, and in assisting him to marry her sister will she not be pursuing a plan of organized hypocrisy? She had worked the entrance to her soul sufficiently large to enter wholly and she scans the interior attentively.

At first she beholds only what she has before seen, and severe examination alone shows her where she can find the truth. There is a veil drawn before the innermost recesses of souls—the esoteric temple, the mystical sekos, and it is difficult to penetrate therein. We are conscious of the existence of this dark spot in our most solemn undertakings. In our prayers we also feel it.

Have you not felt, Madam, in your most earnest strivings for repentance, in those resolutions of amendment that you make at the most solemn moments, that there is something still in reserve? Have you not felt in the confessional of your apartment, or when on your knees in your well-hassocked pew, that though you express contrition for past offences, and

determination never to repeat them, that lurking in your brain is the recollection of some temptation you have courted, and, despite your words, that you would court again? When you pray for strength to resist it, do you pray as earnestly as when you beg to be removed from any evil that may harm the body? When you petition to be removed from temptation, is it with the same fervour that you ask for your daily bread? Is there no inner nook where your bad passions still linger, despite your exertions to remove them, like jam in the angles of the jam-pot, and you know not how to get at them to bring them out? In your every action, we will undertake to say, you feel the same reserve.

You may deprive yourself of a pleasure and give yourself great glory, and praise, and honour for so doing while you really don't care about it. You resign your will to another's, and you say "what a bore!" while you do it. You do it to gain his or her good-will, not to give him or her satisfaction. In fact, Madam, you perpetually deceive yourself, and the truth is not in you, and until either by the sudden grace

with which evangelical converts are favoured, and in which we do not believe, or by painful perseverance you remove the veil which separates the inner from the outer cavern of your head, there is no health in you.

Do not, Madam, consider that I am insulting you, for I consider you one of the best of your sex ; peerless among women.

Emmeline unknowingly felt this self-ignorance, for self-ignorance it is in very young persons, but she soon discovered the veil (love is a very good index), and she saw the veil and trembled. She rushed to it to tear it away ; to behold whatever might be lying behind it ; but as she approached she quaked. There might be a dead body full of wounds and hideous gashes behind—something too horrible to see. True was your anticipation, Girl, but had you then drawn back the curtain many of the wounds might then have been healed, and the gashes closed. Then Emmeline, for regardless of grammar, we jump from one person to another, then Emmeline stooped and endeavoured to creep underneath ; but the curtain was too heavy to be lifted up, and

she caught but a little glimpse of what was really going on within. As she sat back in her chair, and looked through the curtain, what horrible realities flashed across her mind.

Yes! she still loved Dalrymple, and for an instant she was horrified with herself at merely contemplating the possibility that her sister, forced to marry Sir Guy Trevethen, might still leave her cousin free for her! Yes, she felt this for a moment, felt a passing gleam of fearful satisfaction, and she wept and wailed and was penitent; and she called herself hard names, and detested herself, and yet the curtain was not quite drawn—the truth, the terrible truth, would not be cast out. Like a weed that has grown long in a garden, it resisted every attempt to eradicate it. And Emmeline felt that her strength alone was insufficient to draw the veil, and that to obtain the required strength she must seek higher assistance.

She rose from her seat, and opening a door at one end of the room, she entered a small apartment, half room, half closet, which she and her sister, in a fit of high-church devotion had fitted out and garnished as an oratory, and she

knelt down on an embroidered foot-stool before a cross of wood. Not the plain polished cross of modern Christianity, but a cross artistically carved, from wood gathered in Gethsemane, and brought home to the twins. The cross represented two trees, an olive and a cedar, roughly nailed together. The crown of thorns was hanging to the top, the rod was leaning against the side? and the triglott inscription was written over.

It was before this the girl knelt to pray for relief from her sufferings and her sins. She prayed eagerly and fast, she endeavoured to be earnest; but the vision of sin would not leave her. She prayed on and worshipped. Small tapers were burning round the little room in small branches. Exquisite prints of martyrs, virgins and holy men were hung around. Embroidery was spread before the cross. The girls had for years spent their taste, their energies, and their pocket-money, on this little place of worship till it had assumed its present beautiful appearance; and it was beautiful and holy, and fit for pure maidens to offer up their pure adoration, and beautiful would it have been

to see the girl praying and humbling herself in this little chapel before the holy emblem of her holy faith.

She prayed on, sometimes looking up with misery and tears upon her face, sometimes turning that face downwards on the cushion of her foot-stool. Then looking at the cross again, she would wrestle with the horrid thoughts that lingered in her inmost mind. And the girl prayed till the tapers were burning in the sockets, and the early light of morning poured through the small round window she had herself painted. The brilliant spring-sun arose as her head lay buried in her hands. Sleep had forced itself upon her in the midst of her devotions. She had knelt and prayed long and earnestly and now, even in her slumber, she was in the same suppliant posture.

Sleep on and pray on, young sinner, for sinner you must be like the best of us, sleep on and pray on while you may. Reject the small sins before they lose their abomination in your sight. Pray for innocence and holiness while you are still innocent and holy. The time will come when great sins shall appear, by the side

of which, your present ones shall seem to you as nothing ; likewise, will greater cares disturb your rest. Pray now, fair maid, young in sin as in years, pray now and sleep on ; for the time may come when you shall not be able to sleep ; perchance when you may no longer be able to pray.

The morning broke, and Blondelle woke. She looked at her sister's bed and saw it had not been disturbed. Her mind smote her, poor girl ! Her sister was praying for her, while she had not even prayed for herself. She knew not her sister's grief, for her sister, little hypocrite, concealed her feelings. Blondelle entered the oratory and her sister moved.

Then the twins, embracing, knelt together at their little altar, and together lifted up their voices in prayer ; and they remained praying weeping and embracing, till the distant slam of doors, and slipshod maids, announced the commencement of another day.

The writer, conscious of his sins in this his last chapter, his mixture of metaphors and other literary crimes, leaves it for other themes.

CHAPTER X.

Patient, though sorely tried.

LONGFELLOW.

THE sun was shining bright in the morning, as the two girls rose from their devotions, and while Emmeline betook herself to an hour's repose, Blondelle, in her turn, watched and prayed.

We fear, however, Madam, that we devote too much time to the fair sex; that you will think us a superannuated, old would-be beau, lingering fondly over scenes in which we were never an actor. If you do thus think we will not remind you of times when you were a girl, and when we were young; nor of that ball at Watiers given to the allied sovereigns; nor

would we show you various little billets received from a lady, then young and beautiful who danced with us considerably on that eventful evening. Such conduct on our part would be ungenerous, and we only hint the shadow of it to prevent an unkind taunt that you might make to us. To avoid the possibility of such an occurrence, however, we must occupy ourselves by what has become of the hero of our plot.

Mrs. Dalrymple, his mother, it is well known, after the death of her first husband, espoused Mr. Geoffery Moody, a gentleman in the civil service of the East India Company. Left with but a small income, and a still smaller amount of sense, it was perhaps fortunate for her that she had done so, for though Mr. Moody was pompous, conceited, and disagreeable, as indeed are most East Indian bigwigs, he was kind to her and softened ever at her approach.

Her son, however, had, in his earliest days, taken a strong dislike to his step-father. Whether from that hatred of step-parents which nurses often induce, or from the consequential manner of that gentleman, Mr. Dalrymple, as a

child, disliked him, and the only occasion of their meeting, when Mr. Moody and his wife came to England on leave, had not tended at all to remove this feeling.

It is a great and curious peculiarity of most men who have returned, or who return from holding high office in our Oriental possessions, that they ever consider themselves as being, in England, what they were at the seat of their administration. Having received adulation from fellow countrymen, and servility from servants, they expect the same from all classes in their own country, forgetting that, like prophets, there they received no more consideration than other persons, and are not ranked higher than others whose minds are battered down to two subjects, which two subjects in their case, are India and themselves.

There are a few glorious exceptions to this rule, but allow us to observe, that though amongst old servants of the H.E.I.C., there are many intelligent and agreeable persons; in the course of our experience we have met but few who were not self-sufficient, dictatorial, and empty headed.

Geoffery Moody was not exempt from any of these vices; though, probably, honourable and straightforward in his dealings, strict in his morals, and ignorant of any general information as a curry-eater need be, he was as unpleasant in his social relations as is possible for man. To his wife alone was he attached, and being fond of her he took her to India, much to Mr. Dalrymple's grief and indignation.

Grief and indignation, however, are thrown away, for Geoffery Moody is dead. Gone to receive the reward that conscientious dealing, honourable principle, and self-righteousness deserves. What his destiny was we will not, however, pretend to judge, suffice it that Geoffery Moody is dead, and his wife is dying. Her son is by her side day and night, tending and soothing bitter moments, gently combatting with her weak repinings, and only allowing himself leisure to write words of consolation and of hope to Blondelle.

Mr. Moody, he writes her, has left himself, Charles, and Mrs. Moody his whole fortune, a considerable sum, which will enable him to offer her all that can be required by her worldly

parents. His mother, he hopes, will soon be able to move, and then he shall again see his Blondelle whom alone he, &c. &c. &c., which most persons can supply.

His mother lingered on and on, bemoaning her second widowhood and deprecating death only from some misgiving she entertained as to the success of the Bombay Dorcas Society. As it was, she pined on, faintly calling on her Moody, and grieving, or rather fretting, at his absence. The bear, that used for her to play the lap-dog, had gathered up his paws and breathed his last, and she grieved at missing his shaggy coat in much the same manner as she would have lamented the loss of a favourite cloak, or trinket, that she valued, as some ladies do, for its monstrosity.

It must be confessed that Charles was not very disconsolate at the death of the old uncivil servant. He wept with his mother at *her* loss, but the consciousness that she had been left uncontrolled mistress of a large, or at any rate considerable fortune, greatly tended to diminish his grief; and having assumed a suit of black clothes, he felt himself sufficiently collected to

offer his mother the consolation of which she really stood in need. The ivy had clung round two stems, the first lithe and bending, the second stern, rough and stout. The first had died while she was young, the second when she was old, and the ivy, able to grasp no longer, to find no third stem, withered on its root and died.

Yes, poor Mrs. Dalrymple died at Malta, her last moments being disturbed by the savage entry of the Reverend Phineas Jowler, an Independent missionary, then on his way to Bornou, who bursting into her room, shouting, "Lead me to the sinner, that I may lead her to her rest!" effectually fulfilled his portion of the contract by frightening her to death.

The son was thus left his own master, in as far as money was concerned. The wealth hoarded up by old Moody was his, and he was in a position to offer his person and pocket to damsels in a far higher degree of life than the Miss Brookes.

His first attentions having been turned to his grief and the cares of his mother's funeral, he betook himself with as much haste as decency

would allow toward the spot where all his wishes were combined, and taking a passage in a steamer going to Marseilles, accompanied by an old servant of his mother's, he was flying like a carrier-pigeon to the place where he knew he was expected.

Now have we deserted long enough our fair young *protégées* ; and may we with impunity return to them ?

The carriage was ready at the door some time before the two girls emerged therefrom, with the downcast eyes and pale faces that their night-watching had naturally caused. Lady Brooke, up early that morning to plot and manœuvre, had more than once reproached her daughters for their dilatoriness, and Sir Basil, annoyed by the conversation of the previous evening, had as usual vented his splenetic mood on his daughters' "cursed slowness." Poor girls ! they were punctual and ready at the time appointed ; but, "if thine eye be evil,"—and to the parents, nervous from their evil thoughts, the best deeds of

their children at that moment would have been an eyesore.

Lady Brooke provided post-horses for the barouche that was to convey the party to the villa at Windsor, lately purchased by Sir Guy, which was their destination. Her so doing was not without intent, for it left room for her husband to sit on the box, and enabled her to offer the coveted son-in-law a seat inside, where he might at his ease converse with the young lady he had deigned to honour.

She, poor girl, trembling and sick at heart, scarcely dared to speak, for her heart was troubled doubly ; first, at the, to her, inexplicable silence of her lover ; secondly, at the undesired presence of his rival. "But," as saith our learned Eastern friend, in one of whose maxims lieth more wisdom than in ten debates in the House of Commons—the which, by the way, is no great praise—"But," saith he, "Destiny will not be altered by our uttering a thousand lamentations and sighs," yet poor Blondelle, saying to herself that tears were useless, and finding them so, continued to weep.

Sir Guy knew not why this lamentation was

proceeding, but being assured privately by Lady Brooke that Blondelle had but just heard of the death of Mr. Moody, to whom she had been much attached, he set to work to enliven her and obliterate the remembrance of her griefs. For this purpose, he narrated to her how much he had paid for a malachite statue of himself, and also he told her of the price of various mosaics and lapis lazuli tables that he had purchased.

He expatiated on the number of head of game he had killed in one cover, to show her the extended scale of preserving that he carried on. He also gave her his opinion on the state of France, and expatiated on the condition of the poor, a question which poor Blondelle had studied, and in which she was able to detect the superficial nature of his information, which gave her a not unfair reason for doubting as to the depth of his knowledge of the various topics on which he spoke with plausibility. Sir Guy talked of poets, quoting a few lines of each, which he had obtained, as you, Madam, in reading this work may obtain quotations, from the heads of chapters.

Sir Guy expressed a wish to sing duets with

Miss Blondelle, in which wish Lady Brooke fully concurred, having provided music for the purpose, and also having no disinclination to show her own talents in accompaniment. Sir Guy, in fact, amused himself by his conversation, and good-naturedly thought he was amusing others. Blondelle's eyes were, however, ever filling with tears.

She would endeavour to banish her mournful thoughts for a few moments, and to smile ; but then the thoughts were ever ready to occur, that painful lump was ever rising in her throat, and the eyes would gush out an infant cascade. We were nearly saying cataract, but the term would not be agreeable.

Emmeline, with more power over herself, exerted herself to the utmost, and thereby won her mother's good graces and regards. How little did the mother know her daughter's virtues in that matter. Her constant sacrifice of self, her care for the world generally in preference to her own comfort.

Lady Brooke knew her general character and appreciated it, for we invariably acknowledge sacrifices in others, conceiving the acknowledge-

ment a sufficient reward; but she could not know the extent to which Emmeline carried those virtues, and would probably have only called her fool for her pains, had she known them.

Lady Brooke had heard from a friend at Malta, by the same post as Charley, of the death of Mr. Moody, and she had also heard that Mr. Moody had bequeathed to his wife unreservedly the whole of his fortune. She knew Mrs. Moody's character well enough to feel that her son Charles would be the gainer by this bequest, and, provided that Sir Guy's fortune was secured to her family, she did not object to hail Mr. Dalrymple, now the rich Mr. Dalrymple, as her second son-in-law. Had Sir Guy transferred his affections to Emmeline, Lady Brooke would not have objected to make Charles happy with his love; but Sir Guy, first in rank and wealth, must have first choice, and Charles must take the remainder.

"After all, he will perhaps, having got over his first foolish love, settle down with Emmeline;" and, comforting herself with this reflection, prospectively beholding her two daughters

comfortably provided for, and herself the ruling spirit of two large households, she crossed her arms over her bosom, and settled herself down in the luxury of a contented mind, and the cushions and shawls that were profusely spread in the carriage.

Sir Guy, having exhausted his topics of conversation, solicited and obtained permission to smoke a cigar, as indeed he would have been gratified by Lady Brooke had he asked to smoke even in her bedroom, or made any more exorbitant request; for though she unaffectedly disliked the odour of tobacco, again to borrow from our eastern friend, as she "could afford honey, it was better to give it than to sting." Lady Brooke that day was lavish of her honey, and though she coughed beneath her muff and turned pale, Sir Guy lit his cigar and smoked in peace, only occasionally interrupting himself to inform his society where he purchased his cigars, and what their price, and to show two or three cigar cases, on the cost of which he also delivered a discourse.

While Lady Brooke is pondering on her plans, while Blondelle is brooding on her grief,

while Emmeline is revolving projects in her mind for the general happiness of those connected with her, let us again go from the straight path of our history, and with Sir Guy also take a pipe into our hand.

We may be accused by captious critics, of many unconnected and, perhaps, useless digressions, but in spite of our fears on this account, we will gratify a hope we have long entertained ; namely, that should we ever write any book on any subject, we might in so doing put in it a word in favour of the much maligned tobacco.

Despite doctors and croaking friends, we assert that smoking is one of the finest institutions of the christian era. Smoking clears the mind, raises and embodies thoughts, calms the temper and soothes the passions. More than one poet has praised the habit, for he finds it collects his ideas and gives him new ones. He finds himself while writing alone, in society ; for his pipe or cigar acts as a companion : and as a companion, with much advantage over humanity, for it can be laid aside without rudeness, and though it has done

much service can be abandoned without ingratitude.

Yes, Madam, smoking is a custom that should be patronised by all great men, and which is practised by some. An archbishop we wot of, is found oftentimes with a cigar. A learned judge indulges in tobacco. Mr. Tennyson has sung it. Sir Reginald Mohun, another poet, has also celebrated it in his verse. Mr. Thackeray smokes, he has told us so in one of his works. Madam, we smoke.

The octogenarian coffee-drinker being told that his beverage was a slow poison, answered, that indeed it was so, for eighty years had he imbibed, and yet he was not dead. We, Madam, to its detractors, say the same of our herb, and we will not be deprived of this, our only true, unchanging friend. Give us thy "sweet music" and "thy dreamful ease," Oh, tobacco! Summon round us still those well known faces of friends distant and friends past. Conjure up to us still thy soft memories, and still enable us to shadow forth castles and beauties in thy delicate wreaths! Do this for us still, oh, tobacco, as thou hast hitherto

done, and fear nothing, kind friend ; for we, and others, thy votaries, will still be thy warm defenders, and ward from thee the malicious attacks of the faculty, and of all other old women

Thus, Madam, have we apostrophized our favourite plant, and having done so, let us consider ourselves arrived at the villa at Windsor, the property of Sir Guy Trevethen, whither actresses and ladies of light character had hitherto been wont to resort, and where now, for the first time purity entered ; and well might purity make use of that not unhackneyed line of the Italian poets respecting those who entered certain gates.

Virtue, a guest of Sir Guy Trevethen, was like one who being discovered an involuntary spectator of some mystic ceremony, or secret conspiracy, is obliged, either to conform to the rules of the society, or to suffer its vengeance.

CHAPTER XI.

But for the Christian's hope, how hard, how cold ;
How bitterly unjust, our lot would seem !
How purposeless and sad, to young and old !
How like the struggles of a torturing dream !

MRS. NORTON.

IT will only be fair to inform you, that in this chapter there will be no gleam of sunshine, save the real sunshine of nature, for the time that the girls past at Windsor, though the weather was beautiful, gave them no hope—not a transient consolation.

Dalrymple had poured forth his whole heart into his letters, which were sent from Malta. He had told Blondelle his inmost thoughts, his present happy circumstances, and had spoken confidently and fondly of his anticipations of shortly returning to England, and of claiming

her as his bride. He had hinted to her that he had a secret to impart; and that, meanwhile, she must believe no story to his disadvantage, and he had assured her of the love he truly felt, in plain and simple terms, such as his plain and simple nature dictated to him. His letters were such as women love to receive, with the exception of a few flighty girls who love high-flown phrases and Henrietta Temple declarations.

These letters, written for Blondelle's secret eye never were submitted to its perusal. Lady Brooke, that villainness as a certain fair young friend (if we may be allowed to consider her as such) would call her, seized hold of the letters, sealed, we are grieved to say, with seals that had heretofore served a similar purpose and chuckled over them. Brooke had never written her such letters. He had formerly addressed to her epistles it is true, but such as he knew her worldly nature would like: who was to be married to who, and so and so was flirting with such a one; but he had not addressed to her little, simple, childish sentences that each stood an unmistakable proof of

affection. Their mutual correspondence had been written with the artificial pen of steel and the galled ink of social satire, not with the quill of nature and the deep characters of truth.

Lady Brooke had also committed petty larceny on one occasion ; for Charles had sent in one of his letters two small gold Maltese crosses for his cousins, the which Lady Brooke dared not convey to their address, for fear of being compelled to make a revelation that would not have been convenient.

And while poor Blondelle still trusting, was vexing her spirit at her lover's apparent forgetfulness, her mother endeavoured to instil doubts into her mind. Slightly first, and then more decidedly did she mention Mary Archer, and she threw out dark hints that Charles' silence was attributable to the fact that he was with a light-o'-love. But this declaration did not have the effect intended ; for Blondelle knew her mother's character too well, to take everything she said to be true as Holy Writ ; and while it strengthened the feeling so near a relative to contempt, that un-

fortunately had lately sprung up in the minds of the twins towards their parents, it did not shake their firm faith in the loyalty of the absent.

Blondelle and Emmeline loved the absent, and though he reciprocated the passion to one of them only, yet the second confided in him as implicitly, and felt as much assured of his constancy to her sister, as that sister ever could feel.

Day after day did Sir Guy toil at his courtship. Baffled, for the first time perhaps in his life, he renewed his exertions to please only to be baffled again. He himself wished to put off the *coup-de-grace*, the obligation, till the last moment. He had some pride, some vague notion that a free gift is more satisfactory to the recipient than a forced one; and though his unscrupulous nature would feel no compunction to make the use of his power he had threatened, he, for his own vanity, would rather have Blondelle marry him willingly, than under the pressure of her father's pecuniary circumstances.

Lady Brooke, however, felt no compunction at gratifying her wishes at any expense of

Christian or natural sentiments ; she exercised a system of *espionage* over her daughters' actions, stricter than either Austrian or French police. They were never alone ten minutes without her intruding on them on some frivolous pretence. Every letter they wrote, was openly or secretly submitted to her scrutiny.

"Blondelle, my love ; I will add a few words to your aunt's letter ;" prevented any allusion to the state of things ; or, if the letter was written, it was intercepted and revised, or suppressed before it could be posted. In the words of the nursery song : "This horrid old woman could never be quiet ;" and daily some new scheme was devised and put into execution to annoy her daughter into compliance. The poor girl had no friend with whom to advise, for her kind good aunt was far away, ill, perhaps dying.

All minor expedients failed ; and at length Sir Guy having made a formal proposal, Lady Brooke determined to give the master-stroke.

In a private conversation, Lady Brooke, as she said, "frankly and honestly" laid before her daughter the state of Sir Basil's affairs.

She did not say, however, in this "ex-parte exposition," that Sir Guy was her husband's principal creditor, and that his debt would be wiped out by the marriage, as well as some others; but she did say that Sir Basil was frightfully, inextricably involved (in the which the truth was slightly exaggerated), and that she, Lady Brooke, had not the slightest doubt but that, in case of the marriage taking place, Sir Guy, whose generosity was well known, would assist his father-in-law in relieving himself of some of these "awful obligations."

Poor Blondelle, for once in her life, spoke out. She told her mother, that though she had long been aware that her father had exceeded his income, she could not see how he could have affected it so much as had been stated. His own fortune was large, his wife's had been considerable, and he had for some years been in office. She said further, that economy for a few years must of necessity bring Sir Basil's affairs to a proper state; and that such economy need not for the purpose be of a very strict nature. The curtailment of a few unnecessary dinners, an abstinence from

whist, and a little more easy moderation in expensive trifles, would speedily settle the matter; and she did not see why she, who had had no share in the expenditure, should be made miserable for life to enable her parents to continue their career of wanton extravagance with impunity.

Anything else in her power she was ready to do. She would yield her pocket-money, her going out, and all her little pleasures, to assist her parents; but she could not consent to perjure herself at the altar, and thereby to endanger not only her temporal, but her eternal welfare. She would go to Sir Guy and tell him frankly all; she openly acknowledged her love for her cousin, and declared her intention of marrying him despite all opposition. Having concluded her oration, the poor girl's temporary excitement deserted her, and she sank back, half fainting and in tears.

Lady Brooke allowed her daughter time to recover herself partially, while she might gather together some refutation of the statements put forth; but finding none she did not deign to answer the girl's just complaints, but assumed

an offended tone, and taunted her with want of feeling.

She thought she might have been spared this scene. That her daughter, for whose interests they had involved themselves, should now turn round upon her, was too much. What was offered to her? No ignoble situation. To be the wife of a rich young baronet, was a position not to be refused by any but those of royal blood. Besides, was not Sir Guy handsome? She, Lady Brooke, certainly thought so; at least, so she told her daughter. Was he not gentlemanlike? This question she left unanswered, having her own opinion on the subject. Was he not agreeable and clever? As to these two qualities, for the same reason she likewise held her peace. Then, with some allusion to a serpent's tooth and a thankless child, in which this righteous lady had a vague idea she was quoting the Bible, she left the room and her daughter, as she said, to her own thoughts, which must ensue in acquiescence to her parent's wishes, or in bitter repentance.

Poor Blondelle sat in communion with her own thoughts for hours and hours; her yield-

ing nature had been already impressed by her mother's stronger will, and she was more than once on the point of complying with her desires; but then would rise a vision of her young lover, with a look of reproach on his face that she had once seen when he had been justly annoyed by some act of hers.

She pictured to herself the horror of a life with Sir Guy Trevethen—a constant association with a man, whom she regarded with a feeling as near an approach to detestation as was compatible with her soft nature. She prayed, and she was supported in her determination not to swear love to one she could not obey; and when her mother, at dinner-time, asked her if she persisted in her resolution to reject Sir Guy's offer, she humbly murmured, "Yes."

Then her mother announced her intention of avoiding all communication, beyond what was absolutely necessary, with a child who so far forgot her filial duties and obligations. That a girl who, by accepting what many girls would feel delighted and honoured to have in their power to accept, should throw away a chance

of rendering her parents affluent and happy, was monstrous. "King Lear" was perpetually brought into play—studied, we should think, for the occasion. A system of persecution was organised, such as has never before fallen beneath our notice. Lady Brooke did all in her power to annoy the poor girl, in those trifles which, in a woman's hands, are deadly weapons.

If Blondelle hazarded an observation, Lady Brooke sat silent during its delivery, and made no remark at its conclusion. If Lady Brooke wanted anything—a book, a pocket-handkerchief, or a footstool—if no one else were near to ask, Lady Brooke would get it herself; and did Blondelle anticipate her mother's wishes, the service was checked by a "Pray, don't trouble yourself," or a cold "Thank you."

Emmeline was obliged to sit all the morning with her mother. She was daily summoned by that worthy woman, in the hearing of her sister, and was told that "Blondelle could well employ her time, in congratulating herself on the manner in which she was thwarting her parents' fondest hopes," or that Emmeline was not to be exposed to corruption from one who

seemed to have abandoned all idea of filial affection or gratitude.

Sir Basil, when he was about to show his second, and certainly best loved daughter, any little endearment was checked by a look from his wife, which was intended to be seen by Blondelle as well as by Sir Basil.

The girls having a joint-room it could not be changed; but Lady Brooke endeavoured to cut off even the communication and mutual confidence this afforded, by detaining Emmeline in her own room till it was so late, that she thought Blondelle had probably yielded to her slumbers.

Every fiendish pettiness that could be devised was practised. No infernal witch ever watched the mystic boiler with half the attention, that Lady Brooke watched the working that was to produce the desired effect on her daughter's will. The dead man's hair was thrown in at the proper moment; the toad's venom was never lacking when it was required. Though not speaking to Blondelle, she talked at her, and the girl's life was made, as was intended, miserable and wretched.

Insinuations were ever being thrown out against the absent Charles ; and a brother of Lady Brooke's, a man of low principles and debased mind, was easily induced to bear out the charges against the cousin-lover.

But Blondelle had already received some inkling as to Charley's whereabouts, and was not shaken in her faith ; and this mode of procedure, while it increased the wretchedness of the poor victim, by no means altered her resolution or her trust, and she prayed and prayed for rescue from her torture.

Torture ! ay, deep, cruel, agonising torture ! increasing day by day, till it left no hope of escape but the grave. The victim, confined in the chamber that daily contracted, till it was to crush him, had better anticipations. Death would deliver him from his sufferings. But to a girl—a weak tender confiding girl, who loved those around her, and like many girls, lived to love and to be loved, to whom even slight displeasure on the part of those who were the objects of her affection had caused nights of weeping and days of grief, such conduct was a more excruciating torture. It tempered her

will certainly, and rendered it harder and less malleable, but it preyed upon her health ; and now that we look back on those days, we wonder it had no effect upon her mind.

“And Sir Guy?” you will ask Madam. “And Sir Guy, is it possible that such conduct should proceed for a month and more beneath his roof without his discovering it?” No, Madam, it is not possible : Sir Guy had not only discovered, but assisted in it.

At first, Blondelle’s appearance had attracted him ; and, always used to follow the bent of his inclinations and passions, he followed the lead of his first feelings with fierceness of desire. He had anticipated an easy conquest ; had expressed his opinion to that effect to his acquaintances and followers. The latter had coincided with him ; but the first, the respectable portion of his associates, among whom, by the way, he had but few friends, had not given him the same flattering assurance. Many of them were his equals, if not his superiors in wealth and social position, nearly all infinitely superior to him in refinement of feeling and attainments, and they would

certainly not feel surprised at his being rejected ; but would certainly have not felt any great respect for a girl who had, of her own accord, accepted the tiger-baronet.

Sir Guy had, however, announced his intention of espousing Blondelle ; and her contumacious conduct had not only hurt his vanity, but would hurt it still more by exposing him to the ridicule of the disinterested men who had heard his braggart declaration. Baffled passion, therefore, and fear of ridicule still stimulated him in his pursuit of his prey. His feelings had changed nearly into enmity and revenge. He swore that he would marry her, and force her to comply to his wishes by any means in his power ; and adjuring Providence, he watched the persecutions of the girl, and persecuted her still more by intruding himself on the privacy of her mind, even when he saw that though with others she sought solitude of thought.

Lady, this is no romance, but real earnest life.

The time was approaching when Sir Basil and his family were to return to town, and Sir Guy pressed for a conclusive answer.

Again did he throw out hints of the obligations of Sir Basil towards him, and, what had greater effect, his intentions in case the marriage should come off: Lady Brooke heard him, and undertook that, before the carriage started, he should be her daughter's accepted lover.

Blondelle is solemnly summoned to her mother's presence; and though the voice on this occasion is not unkind, the girl feels more frightened thereat than at the late terrific coldness. Snow on the mountain side is safe in winter, though bitter and ungenial; but thawing, it crushes you in an avalanche.

Lady Brooke had prepared her discourse; she had divided it into the proper number of heads, its exordium proposition, argumentation, pathos, and peroration, and having settled her tropes in her mind she felt herself able to cope with her daughter. Let us therefore be present at the interview between the mother and daughter.

Blondelle is seated on an ottoman, while her mother is opposite her in a capacious arm-chair.

Lady Brooke began. She was convinced, she said, that her daughter, who had hitherto

given her no uneasiness, would not cause her now bitter anguish. Her daughter, her dear daughter had lately given her much trouble; had caused her many sleepless nights. Her only wish was for her children's happiness, as they well knew.—A bold assertion this, by no means supported by facts.—Her daughter had, she need not now relate, by her late conduct, given Sir Basil and herself great cause for complaint, and even displeasure. They had discovered in her a perverseness and want of consideration they had never given her credit for; and on what account? They offered wealth, position, and a husband; and she had refused them, for what? For a silly attachment to a boy which could not last a year longer. She, Lady Brooke, knew what it was. Did her daughter think, that she, at the same age, had not experienced the same feelings, that she had not had her little "*passion*" in early life? But she had in a short time got over it; and, indeed, the tough old woman would have got over anything.

Besides this, look at the object of her daughter's love—a heartless young *roué*, who

spent his time like the Prodigal Son, and other disreputable persons. Not that he was to be blamed for this. He acted like most young men ; but, at the same time, he could not set up to stand in the way between her daughter and herself.

Blondelle must have in the time that had been given her for reflection pondered over all this, and arrived at a just conclusion ; and she must have seen the merits of Sir Guy, his kindness, his accomplishments, his generosity, and great deserts. What would be the consequence of Blondelle's acceptance ? She would, in attaining a brilliant position, relieve her parents from the pressure of great want. She would keep her father's name still unsullied and untarnished in the world, and in that way to brilliant fame, to which his commanding talents were quickly leading him.

What also would be the consequence of her rejection of Sir Guy's suit ? Sir Basil's fair fame would be blotted, his glorious prospects, which were on the eve of coronation, would be blasted ; his hopes annihilated. Sir Basil, the senator, nearly a cabinet minister, (Heavens ! how the

woman did lie !) would be cast down from his high place, and have to lead a life of misery in horrid foreign towns, or worse, end his existence in a debtors' jail ! “ And your mother begs and entreats you on her knees ! ” concluded Lady Brooke, as she threw herself back on her soft seat.

Blondelle was silent. More than once—her credulous mind, moved by the appalling representations that her mother's imagination had forged—she was on the point of yielding ; but the yawning gulf of misery that would await her compliance expanded before her eyes, and deterred her from speaking.

Then Lady Brooke was indignant. What, reject her mother's supplications ! draw tears from the eyes that from infancy had watched her every action !—Oh, you hyperbolic old woman !—Blondelle could not be her daughter. She could not have given birth to a child who, for the gratification of a whim, would consign her father in his old days to a jail, and bring her mother's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Such a thing was impossible ; and Lady Brooke turned in an angry walk around

the room. She did not see the deadly pallor of her daughter's face. If she had seen it, would she have abstained from what she was doing? We question it.

Blondelle sat pale and silent. Had you seen her,

“ You must have thought a form of wax
Wrought to the very life was there ;
So still she was, so pale, so fair.”

“ Do you not answer me ?” asked her mother. Yet Blondelle could not speak. Physically and morally, her mouth was shut.

Then Lady Brooke, really furious, cast her daughter from her affection, tore her from her heart; and she was about to make a threat which a parent under no circumstances should even imagine. To make that threat which, the converse of mercy, curses those who give even as those that receive it; but the words did not escape her mouth, for her daughter murmuring, “ Oh! mother, mother! sp—” fell fainting on her seat.

She lay there senseless, she knew not how long; but that fainting struck a blow upon the maiden's heart from which it never recovered.

As animation returned, and she involuntarily struggled to regain a life she would fain have lost for ever, she heard the rustling of a woman's dress and the closing of the door, and as on opening her eyes, she turned them round, she found herself supported by the arms of Sir Guy Trevethen.

Thus was Blondelle Brooke betrothed.

That evening, Mr. Smirke announced to a select society, as we have already seen, the fact of the engagement; and Lord Doveton, eager to announce it, rushed to his club from Mrs. Dalton's, inviting Smirke, as a reward, to sup with him.

Lord Doveton was one of the few independent members of society who consorted with Trevethen, and he pitied him, as we have seen; for he loathed the holy state. But there were many at the Isis when Lord Doveton announced the match, who, with that true appreciation of character which distinguishes well educated and properly feeling men, half divined the true state of the case.

Lord Martinet, curling his moustache, couldn't conceive how a girl could marry such a beast.

Mr. Curt, a young, we are told, a clever, and we are sure, an idle senator, was indignant. "What business," he asked, "has a d—d, oily-haired snob, like Trevethen, to think of marrying such a nice, dear girl, as that?"

Curt, a schoolfellow of Dalrymple's, knew the family, and talking over the story at the House, with his friend, Captain Derven, they both agreed that the poor girl had been forced into the match by that "worldly old devil." Who the worldly person in question was, we cannot imagine.

CHAPTER XII.

Thy destiny hath set it so,
That thy true heart should cause thy woe.

ANON. TEM. HENRY VIII.

It was a dreary journey that journey to London, the day that the Brooke family and Sir Guy returned. The latter was profuse in his attentions, and happy as an accepted lover may be; and how happy is an accepted lover! Yet we, just and correct chroniclers as we are, cannot say that gratified love was the cause of Sir Guy Trevethen's joy on this particular occasion.

There is a feeling deeper perhaps than love, and that feeling is revenge! It was this noble feeling that was gratified in the case of Sir

Guy. This feeling he had entertained for a woman, simply because she loved another than himself.

Had Blondelle been free in her affections, doubtless she would have reciprocated the love of Sir Guy. The devotion of a man holding a good place in the eyes of the world, generally engenders reciprocity in any woman to whom he may attach himself; for

“Maidens like moths, are ever caught by glare!”

It flatters her vanity; and vanity is a great element in woman's affections.

It is vanity in a woman that causes her to love any poet, politician, or scapegrace, that may pay his court to her. She is flattered that a man of eminence should direct his mighty mind towards her; and it is this knowledge of the predilection of women, this vanity, on their part, for great men, as Mr. Stiggins would have termed it, that has made most great men. The Muses were well made women, for it is women who are the originators of all. What stimulates the orator? What fires the warrior? What inspires the poet, the painter, and the musician?

It is not ambition to shine in the eyes of fellow-men ; but it is the feeling, that success and eminence in any capacity, will raise them in the estimation of those gentle beings whom they wish to please.

Unfortunately, Madam, (we abjure the word, alas !) we fear that it is this that stimulates the missionary, the soft evangelical curate, the tenor high-church precentor, and the groaning methodist parson, rather than any sentiment of religion, though they would not confess this even to themselves. It is a wish to ingratiate themselves with women, by laying their laurels at their feet, that is the motive cause of celebrated men. The good man excels in goodness, and the evil man in wickedness for them. Bill Sykes will break into more houses than his rival to please his Nancy ; Fire-Water will tear off more scalps to lay at the feet of his squaw. The Reverend Beelzebub Flummery will preach more flowery sermons, and Lord Hyacinth de Vere will make more speeches, to gratify a holy sister, or “ The lady of my soul !”

A French jester attributed everything to

woman. He said that nothing took place under the sun that did not bear reference to her ; and when he was informed on one occasion that a man had broken his leg by falling from a ladder, on sifting the matter, he found that the individual had missed his footing in looking round at a woman.

It was this feeling of vanity that would have caused Blondelle, disengaged, to love Sir Guy Trevethen ; for he was distinguished by wealth, and he was also distinguished by the wildness of his career ; a celebrity which, we fear, has some weight even with women of the most refined virtue. Why does Lord Martinet please above others of his peers ? Why does Colonel Verderer gain the affections of more women than other colonels ? Because they have already the reputation of being loved by many, and this renown gains for them still more affections.

A woman argues unconsciously thus : the man who has broken more hearts, conquered more battles, written cleverer works, made more eloquent speeches, preached more moving sermons, broken into more houses, taken more scalps than any one else, lays the game accu-

culated by these actions at my feet. He demands in return but one little gift—my love. Shall I not in return for the great present he gives me, yield him the little I can offer? And she gives it, and she loves, and perhaps her love prospers, or perhaps it adds to the lustre that her love may have already gained. It is thus. Thus has it ever been, and thus will it ever be. In lands where this stimulus does not exist, by law, as in the East, or by custom, as in some of the southern lands of Europe, fame is extinct, and man no longer cares for aught but inert luxury and ease.

Blondelle's affections were already engaged; and Heaven forbid that we should say, that the love of woman is never gained but by means such as those of which we have been speaking. Distinction will gain a woman's love; but should that love be obtained without that, the man who has it will have obtained distinction; the woman magnifies her lover's worth into greatness, and invests him with attributes not his own.

Blondelle Brooke's affections were, as we have seen, previously engaged, and even Sir Guy's wealth had no effect in altering them. Sir

Guy, however, apparently took no notice of his betrothed's behaviour. Although she would scarcely utter a sound, he was constantly by her side. He heaped presents on her, and felt elated when he saw published in the newspaper the prices he had given for the jewellery of his bride. Ten thousand pounds for this tiara ; five thousand for that necklace ; four hundred for a pair of ear-rings ; two hundred for a ring. Sir Guy was never tired of answering questions about his wife's jewels, or *trousseau*, which was shown daily at Madame Pompon's and Mr. Gray's, to admiring, and perhaps envious crowds. Let us leave him, however, and turn to others, who have an equal interest in the story.

We have seen that Sir Basil Brooke and his family left London for Sir Guy's villa the day following Charles Dalrymple's starting for Malta ; but though we have informed you what was done during the stay of that family in the country, we have not mentioned the duration of their visit. The visit lasted rather more than a month. About the time therefore that Blondelle returned to town, plighted, as it were, to

Sir Guy, Mrs. Moody had rejoined Mr. Moody in the happy hunting-grounds. In fact, we are not sure that the date of the Brookes' departure for London, and of Mrs. Moody's departure for another world, were not identical.

Poor Blondelle had still hoped to find some communication from her lover awaiting her return. She had looked forward, hoped and looked forward again, and she was disappointed as the young are disappointed ; but when day after day passed, and the time for her marriage was fixed, her hope daily passed away, and left her still more careworn, still more wretched. Day followed day, and hour followed hour, but no hope appeared. The dungeon was still dark, no newly-discovered chink afforded the smallest ray of light.

What was Charles doing ? In a remote island he was busied about the dead. A letter from Mary Archer, forwarded to him on the chance of finding him at Malta, informed him of her "*dismissal*," written, as we have written it, in italics, and between inverted commas ; but this had not caused him great uneasiness, for he considered it only as a portion of the system of

reform that Sir Guy had commenced as a preliminary to his proposal.

The boy, elate at his new fortunes, viewed everything in a bright point, and one difficulty removed, fancied every other obstacle that stood between him and his happiness surmounted. Let us see how he was undeceived. No kindly friend broke the intelligence to him ; for no friend knew where he was, so sudden had been his departure. At Lyons "Galignani's Messenger," with certain commentaries of his own, announced the fact of Sir Guy's approaching nuptials.

"MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.—Sir Guy Trevethen, of Trevethen, in the county of Cornwall, is about to lead to the hymeneal altar Miss Blondelle Brooke, the lovely and accomplished daughter of Sir Basil Brooke, M.P., and Lady Brooke, of ——— Street, and Muddybank. The magnificent jewels presented to the bride have been, for some days past, exhibited at Messrs. Doem's, and have been universally admired for their chaste appearance and unique taste. Mesdames Pompon and Mabilie have also kindly shown to the public the superb *trousseau*

ordered for the occasion, which has also excited great admiration. The Lord Bishop of Lawdnum is, we are informed, to perform the ceremony, which will be celebrated by more than usual pomp, at the residence of Sir Basil Brooke. The wealth of the bridegroom, and the beauty of the bride, have excited extraordinary interest in high circles."

It was the evening before the ceremony was to take place, that Charles Dalrymple landed in his native country. Swiftly as conveyances could bear him had he hastened home on reading the paragraph that we have quoted. Day and night had he continued his journey, with his mind turned but on one subject, on which he brooded waking, and dreamt in the few snatches of sleep that travelling and his thoughts conceded.

Blondelle and her sister were in their room, praying at the little altar ; praying and hoping more earnestly than a condemned criminal prays and hopes for reprieve. Their ears were ready to catch the most distant sound ; every door that opened, every rumbling carriage in the street, each brought a glad anticipation, and

each in turn a disappointment. One by one the scales of youthful hope fell from the sisters' eyes, and they saw clearly and more clearly the desperate truth. A knock was heard at the door; it was Sir Guy, who, with a lover's privilege, came to conduct his betrothed to the last dinner that she was to eat a maiden.

No word did she utter beyond a faint monosyllabic reply; but her pale cheeks and sunken eye, with its downcast lid, told plainly enough of the fearful grief that was working within. Sir Guy felt no compassion. Seeing the misery, he did not boldly allay it by renouncing a plan commenced in caprice and vanity, but now confirmed by revenge and fear of ridicule. He did not look to the ruin of her hopes, the frustration of her only prospects of happiness; for does not a woman's happiness confine itself to domestic peace? He did not reflect that he might gain a willing victim in another, one perhaps as beautiful, higher born, and with gifts that Blondelle did not possess. His expressed wishes were irrevocable; and though he anticipated but little pleasure in their gratification, they must be executed.

Can such man live ? Yes, he lives. We could turn to him and say : " Thou art the man ! "

The happy bridegroom, having made himself pleasant during the evening, talked of his plans, and, as was his wont, uttered common-place in a tone of voice that insinuated wittiness, left early. He had much to attend to, he said. His servant wanted to consult him. His tailor was to be scolded for high crimes and misdemeanors in regard to some waistcoats, one of which was to adorn him on the morrow.

A poor man was to be kept all night from his bed to gratify his whim, for Trevethen had many waistcoats that would have done equally as well for the occasion. He accordingly adjourned to his club, to smoke the last pipe of bachelorhood. On his departure, Blondelle once more would have entreated her mother for a respite ; but her mother's cold face did not soften when her daughter addressed her, and the timid girl dared not speak the words she had intended.

Hark ! she hears the sound of the hoofs of a galloping horse. It stops at the door. The door opens. A new porter, who knew not Charley, coldly answers, " Not at 'ome." He

begs to see his cousins, if but for a moment. Lady Brooke intercepts the messenger going to her daughter's room. He begs to see Sir Basil—Lady Brooke. Sir Basil is “hout,” and my Lady, on being asked, is too unwell to see anybody; but bids the boy, through the footman, come to the wedding. He begs again to see her; and perhaps had he seen her, there would have been no wedding on the morrow. The boy might have offered a higher price for her daughter than even Sir Guy with all his wealth. But it was not to be. It was not for him then to see his cousin, her whom he considered as his bride, and who indeed was so.

Lady Brooke, sitting with her daughters, watched them too narrowly for any communication; and though the poor boy lingered long near the threshold, no opportune chance presented itself.

Still there are some more chances, and to settle his mind, he drives to visit Mary Archer, whom, to his disgust, he finds surrounded by a crowd of men.

“Ha! just come back in time for your cousin's wedding,” says a friend he meets there,

who attributes his deadly paleness to grief at the losses he has sustained ; but Mary's intuition showed her plainly such was not the fact.

One by one the visitors departed, and meanwhile Charley had been pouring for himself huge bumpers of sherry, which on ordinary occasions would have inebriated him, but which now took no apparent effect. It was late before the last of the guests was gone, and left the boy at liberty to consult his Egeria.

" Oh, heavens ! what am I to do ?" cried the boy. " Can one believe in Heaven or Providence ! Here have I been praying for but one thing ; praying to live a life of holiness in wedlock. Everything seems to turn to my advantage, and my hopes are dashed to the ground just as they seem on the point of completion."

He cursed his fate and abjured his faith, so frantic was he.

And Mary Archer checked him in his violence ; for of late she had learned to fear Him of whom she had been before nearly ignorant.

Lady Brooke, the dowager, from whom Charley had no secrets, had been told by him Mary's history and her devotion, and the kindly guardian

spirit that had already watched his youth and that of those he loved, interposed ere it was too late, to save one who had shared her well-loved boy's affections from perdition, by turning her mind to that course which it would have taken long before, had it been conscious of its existence.

Mary had received anonymous letters, couched in no unfriendly terms, but in a gentle, Christian spirit. It had pointed out the true path to happiness ; it had shown how those who had sinned like her had been forgiven, and it had counselled her to take that good part which shall not be taken away, at the sacrifice of luxury, even of present happiness.

Books were also anonymously directed to her in the same handwriting ; books written by holy men, and calculated, from their soothing tone, for one who had sinned almost through ignorance ; and this conduct had already produced its fruits ; for Mary, though she had made no sudden reformation, thought deeply on the subject indicated, and already she shuddered at profanity, and at many things to which she had hitherto been callous.

Thus, therefore, did she check the wild ravings of her friend, and though too perturbed in mind

to feel surprised at the change, he moderated his expressions at her remonstrances.

He told her the whole of his story—all his letters being unanswered, and his visit being rejected; and her sharp woman's mind, joining his statements with some she had heard from various sources, divined very nearly the real state of affairs.

Sir Basil had lately given more dinners than usual at Greenwich. He had purchased Buffalo-hump, that famous racer; he had bought a new brougham for Mrs. Dudley. Blondelle had been occasionally seen, pale and melancholy—pale do we say!—haggard, death-like. Mary had seen her in the park, driving with her future lord, and her downcast eyes and frightened face did not look much like those of a girl shortly to be married.

These circumstances combined in a woman's mind, did they not much resemble a forced match, and did it not appear that all this had reference and was caused by money (oh, thou destroying Apollyon!)? Were there not good grounds for this supposition? To Mary there seemed but two courses. The first was that Charles should seek out Sir Basil, and should,

laying aside all delicate introduction, place at his disposal the whole of his present considerable fortune, on the condition that Blondelle should be his.

"Go, go to Greenwich as fast as you can," said the noble girl. "He is giving a dinner to-day to Mrs. Dudley and some others. I was invited. Go there, and God bless you."

And though it was very late, and Charles had been travelling for days and nights, and had had no rest, he jumped, and was on his road to Greenwich as swiftly as Hansom cab, driven by the "Butcher," could carry him. Fast as horse could put his legs to the ground, did the boy go to the scene of adultery and debauch, but the celerity was of no avail.

A sleepy waiter at the 'Crown and Sceptre' informed him that Sir Basil had not been gone ten minutes, by a special train that he had hired. Charles was too much inured to disappointment by this time to heed one additional, and at his desire the jaded horse was whipped to speed towards Sir Basil's house. But no—it is not to Sir Basil's house he must drive. The noise he must make

necessary to awaken the servants, would awaken also Lady Brooke, would not tend to soften her temper, or to let him see Blondelle, and would prevent any amicable arrangement. Besides, it might create a "a talk" in the world; and even at this solemn juncture, he who had been brought up in the world, still chose to obey its frivolous precepts, rather than the pure dictates of his own heart and conscience.

There was also another reason which prevented his knocking up Sir Basil Brooke's household at an "unheard-of hour." Dalrymple's object was to find Sir Basil himself, not any other of Sir Basil's family. And was it likely he should find Sir Basil at his own house, after a dinner given by him to Mrs. Dudley? He therefore bade "the Butcher" drive to the residence of Mrs. Dudley, and the Butcher winked a knowing wink, and the Butcher smiled a knowing smile, for the Butcher had often driven young men to Mrs. Dudley's at that time of night. And the Butcher chuckled inwardly as he drove his fare to Mrs. Dudley's, for the Butcher loved his joke, and he said to himself in his inward soul, "the Governor's

away to-night," and he repeated to himself an old adage respecting the absence of the cat, and the consequent unbending of the mice.

Yet when the cab drew up at Mrs. Dudley's, the Butcher was disappointed, for he was not let into any secret, nor could he indulge his powers of narration in a fat story to his brother cabmen at the club next day. Mrs. Dudley was not yet returned—so, at least, the drowsy maid-servant said, and she was so positive in her assertions, that Charles could not disbelieve her.

A cold white moon dawned on the last night of Blondelle's maidenhood. The Butcher had been dismissed to his slumbers, for he had grumbled that his horse was tired; and Dalrymple, fearing that he might relate to some of his friends the various drives of the night, was not sorry to part with him, for the Butcher had many stories to tell, and youths of London were not averse to commune with the Butcher, inasmuch as he could tell them much of terriers, which he could also sell to them; and he told them also tales that had come within his own ken, which much amused the youths who listened to them.

Charles, therefore, who was personally known to the Butcher, did not wish to figure in a story, as how the night before Sir Guy Trevethen was spliced, he, Mr. Dalrymple, had been driven first to Sir Basil Brooke's, then to Mary Archer's cottage, then to Greenwich, where he had inquired for Sir Basil, afterwards to Mrs. Dudley's, where he had done the like; and, last of all, to Sir Guy's, for thither Charles, according to Mary Archer's advice, was going.

The second course she had proposed, was a plain demand on Charley's part, made to Sir Guy, that the latter being shown certain correspondence, &c., should yield up to him, Mr. Dalrymple, the hand of the fair Blondelle. It was a middle-aged (*moyen-âge* we mean), romantic sort of proceeding, and one suggested to Mary's mind probably in one of Mr. James' pleasant novels. Yet it is one that has been practised in modern times, and, we are informed, not unsuccessfully. It might have succeeded in this instance, but it was not attempted.

The fresh cab that Charles had engaged dashed off with him from the neighbourhood

of Mrs. Dudley's, and bore him moody towards his destination. Fatigued, ill, and with sleep forcing itself as with a vice upon his eyelids, he half dreamt, half thought, upon the interview that he was about to have. It was a strange position the boy was in, one totally at variance with any that a mind trained in the circle of London could contemplate. To summon a man from his bed at four o'clock in the morning was a strange proceeding of itself; but to ask a man after this unusual intrusion to resign a woman to whom he was to be married a few hours later, was still stranger. This must be done. Duty, honour, love, every noble feeling combined, urged him to do it; and despite the ridicule that would attend failure, or the danger of success, it must be done.

Already had the cab turned into the street wherein, beneath the bright moon, might be seen Sir Guy's house, to use Giambattista Basile's quaint phraseology, "shining like a gilded pill to purge melancholy from a hundred houses ill-treated by fortune." Already had they approached the really handsome mansion, and already had the boy prepared the silver for

his driver. But others besides Charles wished to see Sir Guy. From beneath the shaded side of the small street which formed with the principal thoroughfare the corner in which stood Sir Guy's house, staggering, was seen a woman's form bearing a child. She did not stagger long, for falling to the ground, the cab passed over her arm.

To stop the cab was the work of a second—to place the fainting, half-starved woman therein with her child, occupied no long space of time, and ere many minutes had elapsed, Charles, forgetting his own imminent grief, was knocking and ringing at the door of the neighbouring hospital.

He held the child in his arms—he covered it with his own cloak; and as the poor woman, clinging to him, tremblingly begged him not to desert her, he stayed while the surgeon was performing the necessary operation on her broken limb. He could not leave the friendless woman and the friendless child, and staying, he learnt much that made his Blondelle's lot seem harder than before; for the woman's history, to be summed up in a few words, showed him still

more plainly the stone-cold-heartedness of the would-be bridegroom.

The girl had been betrayed by Sir Guy Trevethen. The daughter of a tradesman at Penloo, he had seduced her and abandoned her. It is an old story, Madam, and a trite incident, but it is true—for all trite incidents are true; if they were not lifelike, they would not so often be made use of by story-tellers.

Day after day had the poor girl waited at his door, and been driven away by the “pampered menials,” or threatened with the police. She had had no food that day, and was waiting, as a last resource, to implore her betrayer, on his wedding morning, as he wished for wedded bliss, or eternal life, to assist his victim and his child. She had taken Charley’s cab for Sir Guy’s, for the latter had not as yet returned. She endeavoured to meet him, and we have seen the sequel.

Then Charles Dalrymple swore that even if he confronted Sir Guy on the steps of the altar, he would declare his character and prevent the marriage. The early day of summer had long dawned, when Charles Dalrymple sought his

home. Before three hours were over, he was to strike the last blow for* the freedom of the woman he loved. But it was many days before Charles again crossed the threshold of his house.

The intense excitement, the misery, the occupation and fatigue had been too much for his brain; and when the hour arrived that he was to have rescued Blondelle from her persecutors, the fever was working its fearful ravages with body and soul. The fierceness of delirium, or low sobbing, could alone be heard from his lips; and for days and days the boy lay nearly dead, alone in his solitary lodgings, tended only by hirelings, till Mary Archer, hearing of his illness, and afterwards Mr. Connell, came and nursed him.

CHAPTER XIII.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength
of youth !

Cursed be the social lies * * *

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's
rule !

Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead of
the fool !

TENNYSON.

It is a glad thing for bride and bridegroom
and a source of gratulation for their friends,
when a wedding breaks with a gladdening sun
and a blue sky. It augurs happiness, at least
so the newspapers say ; and it certainly is
better for the dresses of the ladies and the
appearance of the carriages.

John, in his Sunday best, going on foot to

marry his Susan, is gladdened if the sky be smiling, and one day at least of his married life is happy thereby. Heaven knows it will have cares enough before he and his chubby wife grow much older. In middle-life, the ostlers, whose care it is to clean the flies hired for the occasion, are rejoiced if the festivity chancing on a fine day, does not give them much trouble; and in high life, coachmen and helpers feel the same thing. Bridesmaids feel more conscious of their own charms; and the description of the day ekes out the paragraph of the reporter, who surely must have to tax his brains most considerably on such occasions. A wedding *per se* is always a joyous sight.

We, Madam, as we write, are at Shanklin, most romantic of spots. We know no soul here save the elderly fisherman, the master of the Chine. We wander in his domains nearly all day; for, old as we are, we are romantic still, and we love to sit and bask in the sunshine, hearing the exquisite music of the brook, and contemplating the magnificent works of Him who made the trees to grow. And we sit on a favourite seat, smoking our cigar and reading our book, and we think how fit a place is the Chine for love-

making, till sometimes in our warmed ideas we endeavour to fancy ourself in love, and we try to climb the heights nimbly and to leap the stream, till a gouty twinge reminds us of our age.

But what has this to do with marriage? you will ask. Nothing; but the subject led us thereto. In the forenoon of this day, the 17th of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two, as the morose old man, without a friend, had left the Chine and was standing in the road, a carriage dashed past him, whereon a befavoured lackey was sitting. Within we beheld a fair young creature, clothed as a bride. A lace veil was thrown over the face, which looked happy, oh! so happy, and as she passed, we caught her eye and the eye of her bridegroom, who did not seem displeased at his position; and though we did not know them and do not now know even their names, we felt their joy, and bid God bless them.

The sky and sun seemed to smile upon their nuptials, and as we turned again towards the Chine, we thought and said, "Thou dear old Chine; thou magnificent specimen of nature's art, like other specimens of art, utterly useless,

except that thou dost call forth our praises at the wondrous power and goodness of thy Maker—who has made such lovely places—thy Maker, also ours, who has given us capacity to enjoy them; thou dear old Chine,” we said, “thou hast seen many young couples coo and woo within thy narrow precincts. The seat whereon we now are sitting has borne the weight of many a flirtation. Thine iron-rocks and chalybeate water have spied many a kiss and caught many a honied phrase. Tell us now, did not the bright young pair we have just beheld plight their troths to each other beneath thy spreading foliage and within the sound of thy murmuring brook? Did not the youth first meet the fair one in the ravine, and did he not take her for a woodland nymph till he was happily undeceived? And was it not here that he put the momentous question that was to decide his fate?”

But thou discreetly wouldst answer me nothing, and nothing could I learn till thou, O Silvane! my friend, my companion, and king of the realm, didst enlighten me, and tell me that a “soldier-officer,” lately returned from foreign parts, had come to this village and taken away its pearl, its belle. We wished then, did we not, M^r Sil-

vane ! that we had been a soldier-officer, and that we could do the same.*

Madam, we see you sniggering at your friend, and saying, in your confounded confidential tone, " Our poor friend is getting really, I am sorry to say, really a little *passé* ; he wanders on from one subject to another in a most unconnected manner. I am very sorry, but," &c.

Madam, the truth is this. For the last two chapters we have been telling of things painful to us, and we are approaching a subject still more distressing. With the weakness, therefore, of human nature, we have endeavoured by factitious gaiety to stave off from us the inevitable, to gain time before beginning again a subject which brings before us nothing but harassing recollections.

One of the modes of marriage of the ancient Romans was called *coemptio*. It was a bold avowal of what now-a-days is practised ; but with less candour. The word being interpreted, means a mutual purchase. The marriage that we are about to witness, is not that the same ? The bridegroom pays his price, money, gratification

* See note B. at the end.

of the parents' pride, and a name. And the bride, what does she pay for her share of the bargain? She sacrifices a loving heart, a young life, its joy, its prospects. She lays down all she holds most dear. She has lived for a few short years, if not very happily, at least in freedom and in the indulgence of youthful illusions, and a mind at peace. The years she will hereafter live, few or many, will be one continued misery.

"Blondelle, dear child, kiss me," says the mother on the morning of the wedding, elate at the consummation of her hopes. The same words nearly, had been used heretofore by Mrs. Darling to Mary Archer. In which case was the greater prostitution? The girl who was forced by a stranger to sacrifice her person for a livelihood, or the girl brought up and nurtured virtuously, who was compelled by her parents to surrender hope, principles and conscience, for the gratification of their ambition, and to avoid the curtailment on their part of a few useless luxuries.

Yes, Madam, this is indeed *coemptio*. A bargain, *venditio* !

Deck the victim for the sacrifice ; clothe her in costly lace and silk and orange-flowers, emblems

of the double purity that is to be sullied : the purity of the mind as well as of the virgin. The maiden is to be wedded to one while she loves another. By threats, by cruel torture, she is forced to commit a double sin. A bishop is to consecrate the perjury, and the great ones of the world are to felicitate the parents thereupon. Throw flowers in her path, that she may trample upon them, and that he, the purchaser, may soil them with his step. Let maidens fair attend them to where the Hierophant in lawn sleeves awaits them, and let music drown the profaned words in their blasts.

And did none of the actors feel compunction at the proceedings? Perhaps the bridegroom, even at the last moment, would have withdrawn, had he dared face the astonishment of the world ; but he did not.

Perhaps the father already felt the qualms of conscience, as he looked at his daughter ; perhaps :

“ His heart within him was at strife
With such accursed gains,
For he knew * * *
Whose blood ran in her veins.

“ But the voice of nature was too weak,
He took the glittering gold ;
Then pale as death grew the maiden’s cheek,
Her hands as icy cold.”

And no effort was made to save her ; for the only one whose courage would have dared make the attempt, was unconscious at that moment even of his own existence.

And the bishop stands at the altar, assisted by some cousin-priest, to pour his blessings on the couple. Damsels in white and dames in colours, line the nave ; lackeys are solemn beneath their white wigs and behind enormous favours, and dexterous pickpockets are being collared by sharp-sighted policemen.

The ceremony is performed in the most impressive manner by my Lord, the prelate. The bridesmaids weep the usual tears, and listen to the words, anticipating the time when they shall have to answer at the cues they know so well. Even Miss Burton and Lady Mary Sedon, the two old bridesmaids, who, having performed often, are well up in their parts, feel a gentle tremor at some favourite passage in the service ; but this does not prevent their holding the

smelling-bottle at the proper moment, or kneeling in a good attitude and beneath a favourable light, as occasion may offer.

The bride was lonely in the scene. Some few remarked her deadly pallor. The unthinking many attributed it to the usual feelings of a young bride ; but small was the number that attributed it to the right cause. And amongst those who knew her feelings, how many were there who sympathized with her ?

No tear was in the maiden eye ; no muscular contraction was visible on her lip ; but there was the cold despair of death stamped upon her face with marks indelible. She answered firmly, for she knew not what she said. No nervousness betrayed itself ; no look told of what was passing within her mind. She felt as in a dream, for the horror of her position was too exquisite for her to be able to realize it at the moment, and she did not believe her actions or her words. Did none but ourselves perceive the fearful sacrilege ? When the holy mystery was invoked, did none detect the blasphemy ? Amongst you all, parents, friends, sycophants and triflers, did you not feel the impious mockery ? If you did, none showed it ; for you crowded round the

book to sign your names, and you deluged the pair with congratulations and with gifts.

You young ladies giggled at the kiss, the mocking, triumphant kiss upon the cold polished forehead, and you young men envied and abused the bridegroom.

Then the breakfast is spread before you, and Sir Basil, the father, makes an unconnected and affecting speech, while my Lady, the mother, wipes her matronly eyes with kerchief of the finest manufacture, purchased amongst her daughter's bridal clothes. Mr. Tiffany, the witty M.P., returns thanks for the bridesmaids' health proposed by Sir Guy; and the reporter writes a narrative of the whole more poetically than is his wont, for he is fired by the wine and beauty round him. Drunken footmen, ay, and we are loth to say, serving-women, flirt coarsely below stairs, while compliments and jokes are bandied above. Amidst all this the bride sits unmoved.

Then she is taken to her chamber, the veil is removed, and a bonnet is placed upon her head. A travelling-carriage drives to the door, gay as the grooms can make it; light-jacketed boys curb the fiery horses, and hairy couriers are

sitting up behind and before with the new waiting-woman.

The company rush to bid farewell—the door is opened—it is closed—the snorting horses trot away, and the pure maid, who should have been a loving bride, is delivered into the hands of a heartless sensualist. For him she left a home which, with its many drawbacks, was still a home. For him her early hopes, the only hopes of a woman, were sacrificed; and what will be the return for all this? Read it, Madam.

There are as many slaves in the stone or brick palaces of London, as in the slave-market of Stamboul. Indeed is this a nation of shop-keepers. We bargain for our persons and would haggle for our souls. The merchant and *roué* going to church on Sunday are determined to drive a hard market with the devil.

Thomas, the faithful Thomas, standing at the door grinning, cast after the carriage an old shoe; but as he ran to pick it up, his countenance fell, and he returned with a saddened look. It had fallen in a manner contrary to what, according to his system of augury, was auspicious.

CHAPTER XIV.

Quicquid ab illo
Produdi vitæ tempore, pœna fuit.

OVID.

HAVE you ever remarked how soon any event is forgotten in our great Babylon? Statesmen make mistakes (and statesmen do occasionally make mistakes); the town rings with the error for a month, and it is gone. The wife of some person, whose name is often heard, elopes with some one else, also well known; women condemn her, men sneer at her husband and her lover; but in a month, condemnations and jeers are alike past. A murderer cuts up his wife into little bits; ball-goers are horrified,

but in a month their horror lies buried with the victim's remains. A singer jilts a manager; the latter sues her; opera maniacs flock to Sir Horace Woof to hear the particulars; ladies and gentlemen hunt up music-masters and actors to hear the latest intelligence. The cause is decided in a month, and the manager is a bankrupt, and the singer forgotten.

What a fortunate dispensation of Providence!

Have you ever, like us, Madam, much perused the "Annual Register?" We read it every day. We see some occurrence that must have electrified the world, which is now buried in oblivion. We read that Mr. Dashbrook has kicked his wife. How annoyed must his children have been, his relatives, and hers, who probably cut him for his brutality. Fresh from the book we go to our club—we meet him, we look at him with horror. Our dearest friend is speaking to him, and joking; our dearest friend, we recollect, is Dashwood's wife's brother. How can he talk to him, we think, after this *exposé*? Then we recollect that years have past, that all is forgotten.

We return and read that Lord Dorking has

forged to a considerable amount, and is obliged to flee the country. How horrid! we again exclaim, for his children. We meet his son in the street, dressed in the height of fashion. We avoid him, though our friend. We do not wish to hurt him by speaking to him. He must have a painful consciousness that all are talking of his father's shortcomings. He accosts us jocosely, slaps us on the back, and calls us "old fellow." Then we remember that all is forgotten, buried—at rest in the womb of time.

All things are forgotten, save to those few who, like ourselves, love to dwell upon the gossip of past years. Often in a gay assembly we could tell the wit or beauty of some evening, some truth; recal to their mind some circumstance of life that would make them blush and falter in their talk, and shut up their wares for the night; but we content ourselves with the consciousness of the power, and grin in silence, and wrap ourselves up in reserve, and look with pity on the butterfly whose bloom might be sullied in a moment.

How are all things forgotten, indeed. But

a few months ago, a great country having passed the cocoon of a republic, soars the moth of empire. Leaders pour forth denunciation or panegyric—Punch deserts its wonted humour to indulge in invective. A premier yielding to the wiles of a base intriguer, breaks with his honest, great-minded friend, and, in his turn, loses power. New men rule. Dull, croaking prophecies are made. The disappointed “outs” sneer at their successors. The month passes. After some knocking about, the new men fall into their places as easily as a ball in the pocket of a billiard-table. Lords of the Treasury sign their names with as much precision as though they had drawn up minutes for an age; and the newspapers talk of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and members answer the “right honourable gentleman” as much, of course, as though the Government had dwelt in Downing Street for years. *Le Roi est mort; Vive le Roi.* The king lives; a month obliterate the memory of his predecessor.

Thus before the honeymoon was over, the marriage of Sir Guy Trevethen had ceased to be a matter of intelligence, and had become

history to the world. It was spoken of as a past event, and was used only as a simile or an illustration. Jewels were finer, or less fine, than Lady Trevethen's; the new bridegroom of the day was richer or poorer than Sir Guy.

To the twins themselves, however, this short space had not as yet brought the salve of time. Emmeline had not as yet inured herself to solitary amusement; nor were Blondelle's feelings sufficiently deadened to forget her grief, or not to be aware of the dull-clouded prospect that was patent before her. She passed with her husband from place to place, from Windsor to Wales, from Wales to the Lakes; and as she gazed upon the scenery before her, how dreary did it seem to her when associated with her companion.

Before, she had longed to see these spots in the society of another. How fearful was the contrast then presented to her. She strove—yes, she strove hard to do her duty; she endeavoured to join in the trite conversation of the being to whom she was joined for life, but in vain; she could not respond to his caresses,

smile at his jokes, nor thank him for attentions. Her most earnest attempt could never reach aught beyond a sickly monosyllable, or short phrase of common-place civility.

And the other, the beloved, where was he? First, struggling delirious on a bed of sickness, then slowly convalescing, then weak with the torture of mind, unassuaged and unassuageable. None to visit him, save Mary Archer, now, his *friend*, Mr. Connell, and a few acquaintances, who occasionally gave up a moment of their amusement to cheer the solitude of their sick companion. Lady Brooke, the aunt, was ill, far away, and could not come to nurse the boy; and Sir Basil and his wife had tact enough to know that their presence would only be an insult to him.

The month is passed, however, and the illness, though aided by grief, finds itself no match for youth and constitution. The boy feels hungrier and hungrier daily. Despite his blighted affections, he cannot help feeling a strong desire for beef-steaks and pots of stout, and a week in the country restores a little of the flesh to his bones, and of the colour to his

cheeks. He returns to London, but still weary and sick at heart. No amusement compensates for the happiness he has lost, and the wealth he has long coveted no longer gives him joy with the pleasures it can procure.

Once again, Madam, we must meet in "the world," not for our own sake, but for those of the boy whom we love as we should have loved our own child, had it been determined that we should possess one.

In happier days we had heard Charles express a wish to be present at some entertainment given by one famous for such things. The said Amphitryon was again about to "extend his hospitality," and we exerted ourselves to procure an invitation for our nephew. Poor boy ! he would willingly have remained away ; but knowing the pains we had taken, he was unwilling to disappoint us by his absence, and we in our turn insisted on his presence, in the hopes that it might turn his thoughts to more genial objects than his misfortunes.

There was an intense crowd, such as there always must be at a successful party. Fat men were indented, and fat women perspired through

their rouge; moustaches and shirt-collars became limp, and many a flounce was torn. We ourselves were more than once jostled, and our toes too frequently were trod upon; but scorning these minor inconveniences by boldness and by kindness, we insinuated ourselves into small openings, endeavouring to reach the spot where you, Madam, were standing.

We at length reached you, and greeting you, we soon became immersed in conversation. Our boy was near us, and, as we were rejoiced to see, talking to a pretty girl, whom we knew not. The lady, a stout one, under whose protection the girl had come, was standing back-to-back with us, and we were compelled to adapt our person to her shape, so great was the pressure on every side. Then suddenly the hum of voices was for a moment hushed, and interrupting ourselves in a private witticism which the unexpected silence found us uttering in a high tone of voice, we looked round to behold the cause.

Sir Guy and Lady Trevethen had entered the room, making their first appearance since their marriage. We felt Charley by our side, his

frame still weak, trembling from emotion. He grasped our arm, almost unable to stand, and the frightened girl with whom he had been conversing, was offering him a salts-bottle.

We looked at Blondelle. She was pale, white as a sheet, the impersonation of misery. Her dark, full eye was almost covered by the lid, which seemed to refuse its office; and as her hand lay lightly on the arm of her husband, she seemed to loathe the contact. She had not yet perceived her cousin. Soon, however, her eye met ours, and she returned our bow with an inquiring glance, as though to ask news of her sick lover; but ere a moment had elapsed, the bright flush in her face, the sudden flashing of her eye, showed us she need no longer inquire.

Another minute and the bride had left her husband's arm, and was dancing with her cousin.

We looked at the quadrille in which they had taken their places. We beheld the engrossing talk we could not hear, and we understood its meaning. They both evidently talked hurriedly, as though fearful of recollecting the inevitable past; and engrossed in each other,

they as evidently took no heed of those that surrounded them.

The gaby life-guardsmen lounged, the conceited Treasury clerk looked handsome, the young toady lawyer played heavy antics; but the pair who still loved on uselessly, heeded them not, as they endeavoured to force themselves into happiness for the passing moment: and happy indeed were they at once again meeting, happy if in the pleasure of the meeting they could gain a fleeting oblivion of a fearful fact.

Thus they stood and spoke for some time, and the world conscious of their relationship, and knowing that the boy had also but just made his reappearance, were kind enough for once not to put any bad construction on the conversation; but the husband we beheld gazing on them with a smile of fiendish triumph, and as afterwards he greeted his baffled rival, we observed his glance, and though not of a very bloodthirsty disposition, we could readily have knocked him down on the spot.

Emmeline was also at the ball. Downcast were her looks, and painful to behold; but not so downcast nor so painful as those of her sister.

Can it be true, that in the sorrows of those dearest to us we find a consolation for our own? No, we repudiate the notion as put forward by its original propounder; but perchance a contrast of one's own sufferings with the severer sorrows of another may induce us to bear our lot, though hard, with less despondency. And to Emmeline there was still another consolation. Her fate had not as yet passed the stream that makes return irrevocable.

To Blondelle, sacrificed, even indulgence of feeling was a sin; but Emmeline might love the loved of her youth without transgression, she was free in action and in thought. Still was she wretched at her sister's misery, and at her cousin's grief. Wretched for their wretchedness, still more wretched that she could give no worldly consolation; and she well knew that mortals even in the most desperate cases do not seek comfort from above until they have exhausted all human resources.

The condemned criminal asks no pardon of Heaven till the Secretary of State has refused that which is in his power, and the *roué* seeks no spiritual physician till the human *medico* has

told him that no earthly remedies can cure his sickness.

No! the human passions will find a vent before we can find that calm with which we seek the footstool of penitence. Sometimes the thread of life is snapped before those passions have left room for repentance, and then what becomes of the poor sinner? Let us not speculate or judge, Madam, but let us pray that this may not occur to us. We have already had time enough. Our passions are nearly exhausted. Let us smother what little remains, and with the remaining time snatched from their influence, let us endeavour to wipe out the stains that they have left.

With our usual courtly civility we were attending you to your carriage, and you rallied us on our abstraction. Little did you then think that, not very long after, we should thus narrate to you the cause of this abstraction. We saw our boy taking his cousins to their carriage, while the husband already adopting the rudeness of a British husband (so well criticized in a late clever work written by an accomplished lady), was lingering on the stair-

case, uttering his pointless jests to some old acquaintance. The old acquaintance was laughing as of yore, for he was a man and a toady ; but Sir Guy had found that night that mothers and daughters no longer welcomed his jocosity with the applause that had been their wont. Such marks of pleasure were now transferred to those whose hands were still unfettered.

We were abstracted, for we remarked many contrasts. We remarked the contrast of the coarse gaiety of the husband to the apparent misery of the wife ; the contrast of the attentions of the husband to those of the cousin, and also the attentions of Sir Guy before his marriage to his present carelessness, and we wondered if that carelessness would increase. We were not very long before our speculations received some pabulum. Blondelle and her sister having been taken to their carriage, the husband of six weeks nodded an off-hand farewell to his bride, and lighting a cigar, walked with the old acquaintance to his club. Two hours subsequently Sir Guy was seen playing at billiards at a favourite resort. He was then left at the beginning of a match.

Charles took us home in his brougham. Charles had since his accession to wealth instituted this vehicle, and was driven by a charioteer in splendid uniform. Charles had a night horse and a day horse. Charles had two hacks. Charles had an accomplished valet, and expert grooms ; but as we drove home we found that there was still one thing lacking, one thing, without which no wealth could make him happy. We felt a heavy pressure on our shoulder, and we looked round, and behold ! the boy, not yet recovered from his illness, weak from it and from the excitement of the night, was leaning on me, and weeping like a child. We were not sorry, for we felt it would relieve him ; and we must confess, that though Charles was a dear, good boy, we should not anticipate from his tears the dread consequences that Lord Marmion conceived likely to accrue from those of Douglas.

Now shall we follow the twins to their home ? Let us see whither they wended their way to pour out the exuberance of their misery. Mingling their grief, they repaired to their little prayer-room, there to endeavour to gain the

comfort and peace of mind of which they had been deprived, by those whose duty it was to administer to their happiness. Again did they pray for a remedy to those griefs they had vainly endeavoured to prevent; but prayers seemed to have lost their efficacy, no responsive voice was heard in the tabernacle of their soul.

The soft smiling picture of the Holy Mother, in which, in their sanguine youthful days, they had often descried a beaming look of kindness, now bore the cast of countenance only, which the artist had given. They found no star, glimmering in the distance, to guide their way. Their life was one blank vacancy. Even death could give no solace to the bride, for she felt that, despite her wishes and exertions, she entertained sentiments that were disloyal to him to whom she had been compelled to swear fealty and obedience; and though those feelings were in fact the aggrieved, the feelings that had most right to complain, she had an inward consciousness that they would militate against happiness, present or future.

Yet this was the accomplishment of Lady

Brooke's wishes, and the world applauded Lady Brooke, envied her success in the marriage of one daughter, prophesied the marriage of Charles Dalrymple, now a *parti*, to the second daughter, and said that Lady Brooke was happy. She was so; and happy should be the mother who has forced her daughter into the choice of sin, on the one hand, on the other, death.

Long did the sisters talk together. Vainly did Emmeline bid her sister resign herself to kiss the cross she was forced to carry—the only species of consolation left—and vainly did Blondelle resolve to wean her heart from its affection, and to look for happiness to this gentleman then passing his evening in an exciting match of billiards.

The night was far advanced when Blondelle left her father's house to seek her couch, that couch which should have been the representative of hopes accomplished this side the grave, of truth, of hope, of unalloyed affection; but which, unfortunately for her, was fraught with aversion, with horror, and with dread.

On her way home she endeavoured to console

herself with calmer thoughts, to look upon her fate as less terrible, to clothe it in brighter colours, that, even though its reality could not be changed, she might disguise it from her view. Still 'were her efforts vain. As the carriage drove to her own door, a shudder came over her as would convulse an outcast, who, dreaming of home, should be awakened by the cold droppings from a roof. She bent her head as she entered her house, that her domestics might not behold what she considered her weakness; but their watchful eyes had not lost the expression of her face; and James next morning was canvassing with Anne, the probable cause that had sent "M'lady" home in tears.

There is a house in London, a house with a magnificent frontage; though bearing a strange appearance—an appearance that would lead you to believe that the deeds within are not intended to see light; for above the portico, the windows looking on the street are built up, and you might think, standing without, that the sun never shines within the lofty walls. To this house we must beg you, Madam, to accompany us for a few moments. We will first take

you to a room well furnished with divans and sofas, well lighted, and adorned with pictures of no mean pretensions. In the midst is a table covered with a profusion of delicacies ; jars, marked Yorkshire pie, stand thereon ready for consumption ; hams of Bayonne, and jellies flavoured with curious liquors, invite guests.

“ Hail ! Youngacre,” saith a young guardsman, filling a bumper of champagne, “ hail ! Youngacre,” he saith to a man near him, half bald, and butler-like, respectable. “ I greet thee, Youngacre, and tender thee my felicitations, in that thou hast entrapped another youngster into this thy den of iniquity,” and the youth, who piqued himself on quaint phraseology, quaffed the contents of the glass and winked knowingly on the old usurer.

“ Ho ! Rhadamanthus, ho !” again murmured the military youth, pouring into his glass the effervescent liquid, and speaking in the veiled tone of incipient intoxication, “ breathe gently in mine ears, oh, Rhadamanthus, collector of people, as would say the Grecian. Breathe gently in mine ear, and tell to me the name of the wealthy youth, who now with Guy

Trevethen, doth shake the tempting dice. Tell this to me, Laughter-less, or will I drag him from thine embrace, as in the times of old was Theseus rescued from thy clutches."

"Oh, my Lord, what a man you are for a joke," said the mystified Youngacre, and he whispered the name of Charles Dalrymple in the guardsman's ear.

While he spoke, from the adjoining room was heard the mild voice of the hapless youth.

"Seven," he spoke, "seven."

"Seving's the main, gentlemen," responded a vulgar voice.

A hollow rattling was heard, then a dead sound, as though a hard substance struck a wadded table.

"Seving's a nick," continued the cockney accents, and then there was a pause.

A billiard-table was standing in the middle of the apartment, next the supper-room; over it hung a chandelier with shaded lights, which cast a soft glimmer in the chamber. Round the table were seated some three or four men of different ages. There a grizzled moustache, and forehead contracted into inflexible furrows,

showed the hardened gamester; there, the flushed cheek and disordered hair betokened the young enthusiast. At that table sat Charles Dalrymple, who had entered the house at the same moment with Sir Guy. Before him lay spread pieces of white cardboard of different lengths, which were guarantees for sums of different amount; for that night, luck seemed to second the neophyte's every effort. In his hand he held a dice-box, while near him stood a bottle of soda-water and a decanter of spirits, of which he frequently took long draughts.

Sir Guy Trevethen sat near him, and gazed intently on his neighbour's features, for this pursuit was the only one which the worthy husband really loved. At every throw Charley won, and assisted by a friend near, he played so judiciously that his heap of counters gradually increased to an unwonted size. Youngacre looked on, with the smirk on his face, that no emotion ever altered, but with dire misgivings at his breast. The two croupiers, Æacus and Minos, as the young guardsman dubbed them, experienced disagreeable sensations as they threw over the winnings of the youth, who endeavoured

to absorb his mind in the game in which he was engaged. Sir Guy also accumulated no considerable quantity of the cardboard money, and prompted his wife's cousin as to the disposition of the stakes.

How different would have been the conduct of the two had they changed positions. Charles, the married man, would have retired to his home hours ago ; Sir Guy, the rejected, would have dined at Greenwich, and consoled himself with hireling affection.

Charles, now the rejected, was trying to obliterate bitter memories in a pastime he naturally disliked : those memories rendered more bitter, his jealousy rendered more intense, by the disregard shown by the possessor, to the woman for whom he, Charles, would have sacrificed all.

We are not going to give you now, Madam, a dramatic incident. Charles did not break the Bank ; neither did he challenge his cousin's husband. After long success, his fortune turned and he then left the table a considerable winner, bidding Sir Guy good-night, in the usual tone of social courtesy.

As says the Italian, " When the night, having

stood by and backed the robbers, gets aid, and goes about collecting off the sky the faggots of twilight," or in other words, "when morning sends to bed hot-coffee-men, and reveals the piles of flowers in Covent Garden Market, the gamesters retired to their bed. Charles, to take the deep unrefreshing sleep, that greets the weary and heavy laden ; Sir Guy to slumber off his debauchery with the careless rest of the heartless, by the side of his innocent bride.

CHAPTER XV.

She sleeps !
My lady sleeps.

LONGFELLOW.

A slumbering thought is capable of years,
And curdles a long life into one hour.

BYRON.

BLONDELLE had retired to her couch. She slept.

The white quilt heaved softly with her breathings, and the smile and flush upon her features would have caused a stranger to believe that she slept the sleep of peacefulness. Such was not the case.

The smile and flush proceeded from the thoughts which suppressed in Blondelle's waking

moments, took advantage of her unconsciousness and led her into the wide field of speculation. Awake, she dare not contemplate what her life might have been, the reaction of reality would have been too much, but in sleeping the control was removed, for Prudence likewise slept.

A vision passed before her.

There was a house on the banks of a river. The sky was bright, the vegetation luxuriant, and she was playing with the comrades of her childhood. First they would chase the butterfly, then roll upon the grass. The boy in brown-holland, and cinctured, would climb daringly the trees that hung over the water, to show off the superior powers of his malehood, and to gather some desired branch or blossom.

An observer might behold on the countenance of the sleeper the anxiety during the performance of the feat, and the exulting admiration as it was successfully concluding—but, but the branch breaks, and the reckless boy is precipitated into the water.

Then there is anxiety and eagerness again depicted; the sisters rushing to the bank extricate the youth from the accident, which, owing

to the shallowness near the margin, had placed him in no very great danger. Then came the flush of joy at his safety, then the glance of merriment caused by his appearance, as muddy and dripping he issued from the stream.

The same scene still remains ; but the sisters are sitting unaccompanied on a bench. A hoop is lying undisturbed ; a picture-book unthumbed ; a doll is reclining lazily, unkempt and wearing a dirty dress. The boy has gone to school, and happiness for the moment seems likewise to be under strict discipline. A shade of care comes over the polished brow, but transient is it and soon passes.

Other scenes pass by, all youthful and likewise transient, before faith in man was shaken and even trust in God was weakened. The joy is not enduring, neither is the grief. They fly quickly, too quickly, and the retrospective portion, the real is gone.

What follows is what might have occurred. The potential is an unsatisfactory mood ; but still, in contemplating the past possible we sometimes forget the present truth.

What a joyous smile bespreads the features

of the bride as she looks upon her radiant bridegroom. The carriage rolls on, and she nestles and leans upon his bosom. His arm surrounds her, his heart beats against her neck, and she throws her head quite back upon his shoulder. Her upturned eyes gaze into his; his hand presses hers, and leaning he does his duty, offering his homage on her cheek.

The look of love beams brightly on the girl's face.

Then the carriage rolls over artificial walks, and through shrubs, which, planted thickly and heavily-foliaged, form shady groves. Birds whistle and enliven the air with melody. The road winds and winds through a scene of sylvan beauty. The sky is blue—blue, deep blue, of the southern azure that youth conjures up, till it finds that even Italy's atmosphere is not so blue as it has imagined.

The gum cistus and the oleander scent the air, and deep-coloured flowers decorate a verandahed cottage. The dark Mediterranean, the Mediterranean of a dream, is spread before, and the smile is happy at the white sails. First

behold the sea, then turn to the house where love is meant to dwell.

The purple cobeia, the rich jasmine, the floribund clematis, and splendid bignonia cover it with floral magnificence. Gaily-attired peasants greet her arrival, as in a play. Tinkling guitars are heard, and songs of welcome. The peasants dance beneath the groves, doves coo, and gladness reigns around. The husband descends to lead his wife into this abode of bliss. A glance of love rewards his. She gives him her hand, and as he takes it she turns to him in fond affection. "But behold! it was a dream!"

She turns and wakes, and hears the stertorous breathing of her lord, who, reeking from his tobacco and his play, is heavily lying by her side.

CHAPTER XVI.

* * σὺ μοί ἐσσί πατήρ καὶ πότναι μήτηρ
 ἤδ' ἐ κασίγνητος, σὺ δέ μοι θαλερὸς παρακοίτηρ.

ILIAD Z. 429.

SPEED on, old Time, or rather young Time, for we are sure that thou art not the same Time that in childhood trod lazily during school, and in youth unfolded weary hours till the moment for the opera or ball. Speed on, young grandson of that old Time, who now in our old age revellest and rushest with the quickness of Phaëton, and pressest with equal foot, like Death, the princely palace, and the pauper cot. Speed on and bid our quill follow thee as quickly, for we are weary of dwelling on

our grief and would bring this tale to a conclusion.

The blow that the marriage had inflicted, losing the first acuteness, had gradually subsided into the numbness of fixed grief. The sorrowers would feel a dull consciousness of unhappiness, forgetting for moments the cause, and they had already resumed the ordinary occupations of life. Dalrymple resigning the exalted diplomatic post he held, yielded himself up to the occupations of wealth; Emmeline absorbed herself with balls and early church; and Blondelle busied herself by furnishing her own suite of rooms in her own taste.

She also went into society, often taking her sister with her, where they were received with open arms, but no longer with the lionship of novelty. Other events had completely obliterated them as a topic.

Monaco was blockaded; San Marino had falsely imprisoned a British cook-boy. The Scilly Islands had become a republic, or a Sir Doler Sharpe had levanted. Many important subjects engrossed the conversations, and Lady

Trevethen and Miss Brooke entered a room unmolested.

Let us return far back and find a character whom we have treated with the most unpardonable incivility. A lady whom we may regard as the author of any good qualities that our young friends may have possessed, and whom we have forgotten, as in fact we mostly do forget all that is and all who are good.

Lady Brooke, the Dowager, if you recollect the last time we had occasion to mention her was far away from the scene of the story ; this is the only excuse we can offer for ignoring her so entirely. In declining health she had sought the pleasant west ; Torquay, where dwells a maligned bishop ; Plymouth, the residence of Holy Sisters, persecuted by rabid parsons. She had dwelt on the banks of the sunny rivers, and apart from the world she had devoted herself to works of religion, charity and valetudinarianism.

Lady Brooke, good worthy woman with every virtue possible for woman to possess, was involved

in a Chancery suit. The rights of her story we have never been able to discover. She, indeed, has more than once related it ; but still we are in darkness. A Quaker it appeared had commenced it. Quakers we are informed by a late work on Quakerism, are good hands at a Chancery suit. Lady Brooke had bought a small property of a Quaker uncle, and two years subsequently a Quaker nephew commenced the suit.

It had therefore become necessary for the unfortunate lady to leave her retreat and find her way to London, to watch the filings, and the injunctions, and the Petty Bag, and the Hanaper, or whatever else appertains to the Court of Chancery ; and weary of the delays, harassed by the noise of the town, she had fixed her abode in the neighbourhood of Richmond. Hither it was the delight of her nieces to wend their way when no other engagement prevented their so doing. Here they found their Dodona. The kind priestess gave them good and holy advice, without ambiguity or subtleness. It was that good advice which few, if any, ever take ; to make the best of a bad case,

instead of devising impracticable means to cancel it.

The sisters had together concocted a plot: a plot such as in their early days had been their delight, in the execution of which they intrigued much, and put in play the utmost powers of their youthful cunning.

Lady Brooke invited the two to tea at her Richmond Cottage. They were to have the repast in the garden. Strawberries and cream were to be spread before them on the lawn; little children were to be invited whom they were to amuse, and they were to sleep in a little room they had fancied, which looked on the river.

Sir Guy was consulted, who sneering at the innocent manner in which she was amuseable, consented to his wife's absence, and she, poor creature, glad of any expedient which could obliterate, even momentarily, the thoughts of her present lot, endeavoured to occupy herself with the thoughts of her simple pleasures.

Toys were bought for the children she was to meet, and games and puzzles. Mr. Dratt was engaged to conjure for them and

a miniature illumination was planned for the miniature garden. Dolls and sugar-plums of enormous size were sent to Richmond, and a cart-load of gifts driving up to the little door was received, with wondering eyes, by Lady Brooke's page who opened it.

At four o'clock in the afternoon Blondelle and her sister were seated in the little pony-carriage that Blondelle was wont to drive, a pretty little, fairy-like affair, drawn by two small and pecuniary obstinate dun ponies.

Jeannette the maid had been previously dispatched with the other baggage in an omnibus ; and full of passing happiness and glee, the two started, laying out schemes of harmless dissipation.

Tricks were suggested, by which a passing fright was to be given to the young guests. The starts that were anticipated on the appearance of a face with immense eyes that the two had painted for the magic lanthorn, gave rise to much amusement, and Emmeline with

a white handkerchief over her eyes was to personate Goody Somebody, whom Blondelle was prievously to calumniate with vague and wondrous stories.

Thus did they converse on the road to Richmond, enjoying the scenery as very cockneys, and anticipating great delight from their aunt's *fête*.

Poor Blondelle ! Your hopes even the most trivial and the most innocent seem fated, and formed but for disappointment. As the little dun ponies drew up at the cottage door, and as the smiling girls were preparing to alight, the little maid and Lady Brooke rushed to meet them, horror and dismay upon their features. The youth of buttons who the day previous had received the cargo of presents at the door had sickened towards the evening of the day, and had fallen ill. Scarlatina had just declared itself, and Lady Brooke, her mind full of ideas of infection, had sent round to warn off her little guests, and now forbade her nieces to enter her house.

How often does a little accident cause great events !

The poor girls, ready to weep at anything, wept bitterly at this small mishap, and retiring to their little oratory prayed again. They prayed for the page's recovery. We doubt if they cared much for his life ; but women must pray and weep for something when unhappy, and in this case they laid all their grief at the door of the unfortunate boy.

It was long before the tears were dried up, and the bosom had ceased to heave ; but there is an end of everything and the grief of the momentary disappointment having passed over, Lady Trevethen took leave of her sister, and attended by the faithful Thomas, betook herself to her home.

The night had far advanced—the hours were waxing diminutive as the young bride knocked for admittance at her own door. The sleepy porter delayed some time before opening, and Blondelle to her astonishment saw lights within the windows of her own peculiar apartments : not the glimmer of a single candle that might belong to a maid, but a brilliant illumination, as though the glass lustres and chandeliers with

which she had adorned her room were blazing in their full effulgence.

The strange incident struck her as resembling one of those strange Teutonic stories of the wakened sleeper, who beholds the room around him lighted, and strange warriors of ancient days seated round the board where he has lately eaten his *kraut* and drunk his not less sour beer.

The porter, sleepy and sulky, at length opened the door, and gazed in an astonished manner at his mistress. She thought him drunk, but she soon found he had cause for his astonishment. There was an embarrassment in the menial's manner which also surprised his mistress. He commenced lighting her up stairs by a large wide staircase which she seldom made use of, instead of the private one which led directly to her apartments. He told her first that Sir Guy was absent, and then that he had returned some time; and had not Blondelle remained in her first misconception that the worthy porter was intoxicated, she would have been very much puzzled by his conduct. Reserving her censures however for a future

time, she desired him to give her a candle, and alone sought her apartment.

Blondelle, as we have before mentioned, had chosen for herself, and furnished in her own manner, a set of apartments or *quartos*, as the Spaniards would say, in her husband's house.

In their situation and arrangement she had exercised her own choice. They were situated in a wing of the house, and a side staircase led to them. They were separate and remote from any other portion of the building, and when there, she was safe from surprise, and could play or pray, and hold private conversation with her sister without the risk of sudden intrusion, for any step announced a visitor, as a corridor led no whither but to her own rooms.

Slowly does the bride ascend the steps that lead her to her chamber—slowly and pensively her small foot presses each grade. Her light in her hand, she seemed like Psyche seeking the couch of her lover. But in this instance no curiosity to see her lover closely, drew the woman to her loss.

Slowly does the bride ascend the stairs, unconscious of any unusual circumstance that is to occur. She knows not that before her heart and pulse have beaten many more pulsations, before the candle burns itself a line the lower, the event of her life is to happen. She walks up slowly and unconsciously.

Now with a start she stops, the light casts a shadow on the wall, and the girl's slight figure is reflected; her head is bent forward in an attitude of attention, the lamp shone with "expiring gleam"—

"And twice she paused, and on its trembling beam
Gazed with suspended breath, while voices seem
With murmuring sound along the roof to sigh."

A hand runs quickly down the notes of the piano in her little sitting-room. A voice sings a few notes of some song, and Blondelle, hastening up the stairs, stands in an ante-room. A door is open before her. She is concealed in the darkness, for she has left her light upon a table near the stairs.

Before her is the room where she and her sister have prayed and read the book which

alone gave them comfort. The hanging lamps are lighted. There are the prints which she has collected, engravings of rare value, depicting holy or at any rate innocent scenes. Here children are making hay or playing with a dove ; there is one where young maidens pray ; there where choristers melodiously chant their praise. Scenes of happy childhood and glad country pleasures.

More sacred emblems also adorn the walls, the walls curiously adorned with gilding designed by her own taste, and which she had considered reserved for her own pleasure and presence ; within which she had not even admitted her friends, and where she endeavoured to conjure up and react the innocent occupations, that had till lately been her only happiness. There she saw some volumes that she often read, the numbers of some calm poet who sings of childhood's pleasures and chants unexciting lays. There she sees scattered about the simple novels which she peruses, novels telling of successful heroes who attain ultimately the object of their legitimate attachment, and of heroines who, escaping from the trammels of

feodal guardians and mercenary aunts, are united, in the bonds of matrimony, with gallant knights or suddenly-enriched younger sons.

Tossed about are her works; yes, she even sees her Bible and her cross-adorned, illuminated Book of Common Prayer lying beneath a gay lace scarf which is not her own.

The whole internal economy of the room is upset. Tables are banished and others introduced, sofas are exiled and small chairs reign in their stead.

In the centre of the room stands a table—sweetmeats and fruits, fresh and preserved, are thereon, in golden plate. Wine bottles bestrew it, and cups and flowers. Lights are burning also in golden receptacles. Evidently a feast is at its climax and an orgy is commencing.

The *mensa secunda* had begun. But who were the guests? For whom was the supper spread? For whom was the retreat of the bride desecrated?

Round the table sat eight persons—four men and four women. The four men were Sir Guy Trevethen, Sir Basil Brooke, Mr. Sidney Darwood, a poet, and Mr. Smirke before-mentioned,

who had been invited as a buffoon. We know not who were the women companions, nor would we wish to know them further. We will, if we can, describe the feast, as Blondelle,

“ With palpitating heart and straining eye,”

beheld it.

Sir Basil and Sir Guy, the noble pair, sat with two of the women, paying them soft compliments in bad French, and filling their glasses perpetually. To them the sight of a woman inebriated was pleasing. Sir Guy was smoking a cigar, and Sir Basil perpetually arranged his hair with that gentle touch which generally characterises the wearer of a wig. In fact, Sir Basil's hair was false, although it was so well fashioned that more than once it had been the basis of a bet.

Mr. Smirke was also smoking, and a witty man was amusing his partner with his jests uttered in the French language, purely spoken ; but with the affectation of accent assumed by most Englishmen who are conscious of their proficiency in a foreign tongue.

The poet, kind-hearted though deboshed, sat

smiling on the gentle large-eyed woman by his side, smoothing her auburn hair, and in his fancy investing her with attributes sufficient to excite his clever, dreamy mind. Oh! Darwood, Darwood! fain would we love you, did not considerations deeper than our feelings and your own foolish conduct prevent us. Never were bright prospects, great talents, and universal popularity more recklessly, foolishly squandered and lost than your own.

"Eh dis donc!" said the poet's companion, "à quoi bon cette casquette?" addressing Sir Guy who wore a dandy smoking cap.

"Parskir dje crwaw," responded the linguist Baronet, concluding his sentence in his own tongue, "that it prevents the smoke getting into my hair, which would disgust my wife. He! Brooke! Ha, ha."

"Mais toi," said the little woman, with her large black eye turning to the poet, "toi Bibi, tu n'as pas une petite femme?"

"Non!" rejoined he pensively, stroking her tresses. "Veux-tu donc me broder un tel bonnet?"

Then came a rejoinder in pretty broken English :

“I will not work you a cap for your bad purposes.”

“I did not ask thee to work me a night-cap,” and the silky hair again slowly passed through the poet’s fingers.

“Fancy !” burst out Sir Basil, “Pauline Journet is going to marry that ass Rubsworth, and begad ! she has told him of all her old amours !”

“Quelle audace !” cried his companion.

“Quelle franchise !” said the poet’s gentle friend.

“Quelle mémoire,” growled Smirke, resuscitating, for the occasion a now almost extinct joke.

Then there was a lull for a few moments, and the bottles gurgled and the glasses were replenished.

“Come, Smirke, give us some melody,” asked the host.

“Yes, tip us a stave,” said Sir Basil in an off-hand manner.

“What will you have ?” inquired the editor,

ever ready to pander to the slightest wish of an exalted friend.

“Something erotic,” murmured the poet.

“Yes, something erratic,” continued Sir Guy, not understanding the word, and wishing to appear knowing.

Mr. Smirke then, in poor Blondelle’s hearing, poured forth the following effusion. He had a fine voice and a good ear. It was pity that he had not turned them to better advantage. The song he sang breathed only of perverted love and base desire. It was set to a wild, savage air bursting forth at times as though the spirit of the measure could not be controlled, at other passages sinking into the soft strains of deep, earnest love. Thus it ran. The words were rough and rugged but they pleased his audience. He addressed them to the woman by his side.

SYLVIA.

“They praise the charms of thy form so fair,

Sweet mistress mine ;

The ivory skin, and the raven hair,

And the eyes that shine ;

But those charms thro’ a dull, cold veil they see,

And that veil is lifted alone for me !

“ ’Tis mine alone to drink the sigh
Of passion’s height,
When flames electric darting fly,
Convulse the frame, illumine the eye
So wondrous bright.
When the rich dark mass of thy silken hair
Its waves unbound,
Forms o’er thy beauty a mantle rare
Floating around ;
Striving to hide with envious skill
That bosom soft and glowing,
As pure as snow, but without the chill,
Where courses wild the ardent thrill,
Like fires in Hecla flowing.
’Tis mine to divide each glossy tress
From thy softly yielding form,
And that yielding form in my arms I press,
As it bends and bends in my fond caress,
Trembling in passion’s storm.

“ My heart, my life, my soul I’d give
For an hour with thee :
In one such hour of bliss I live
An eternity.”

The song was sung, and the thirsty singer imbibed another glass of the red wine of France. The poet kissed the forehead of his mistress, and again stroked her soft curls. Sir

Basil's head was bent upon his chest, and his nose gave signs of a spirit for the moment at rest. Sir Guy's head was leaning on the bosom of the lady near him.

Blondelle had heard the song, and she beheld the scene before her. She was unconscious of her existence—she was not able to feel the full weight of the crime that had been committed—she had not been able to understand half the meaning of the lines that poured forth upon her ear. She scarce knew who the women were, whose society was polluting the atmosphere of her abode.

But she felt that that abode was no longer fitted to contain her; that the rhymes and the conversation were the rhymes and conversation of dens, of the existence of which she was barely cognizant, and that the only term that could be applied to the lady-guests was one which could not be employed in her presence.

She stands for a moment, then shuddering turns away. Yes, she shudders, she shrinks at the horrible sight, as she would have shrunk from the sight of the corpse of a person she had disliked, who had met a violent death. Though odious when living, the sudden

rupture of human ties could not leave her unappalled.

Blondelle shuddering turns away. She wraps closer around her the shawl she had not yet laid aside, and she lays upon a table near her two bracelets, the only ornaments she was wearing that her husband had given her. She would retain nothing of his. She would fain have thrown aside her clothes and her identity, polluted by the pestilential house.

Slowly, she descended the staircase which her foot had never pressed but with disgust. She walked through the spacious hall lightly, for she feared arousing the porter, who she knew was, according to his wont, asleep. She opens the heavy door, she steps out, and the portal of her husband's house closes upon her for ever.

Yes, for ever. Despite of obloquy and scandal, despite the abuse of the world and relations, and the proffered mediation of many, Blondelle never again crossed that threshold.

She walks alone in the street. It is not long before dawn. The policeman astonished gazes at her, and perceives she is not one of those who usually perambulate the streets at that hour.

Her hurried, anxious, and dignified appear-

ance protect her, strange to say, from insult. The Thyïad does not accost her as a companion, nor does the late-lived medical student address her with his accustomed low banterings. She walks quickly, nearly running, to her father's house, to seek a refuge for the night, and even there she feels she may only sojourn until morning.

She rings, and the faithful Thomas opens the door and admits her. She begs him not to breathe a word to any one of her presence, and to procure her a hack-carriage early. She seeks Emmeline's room, who waking, sees her death-like sister, and no one may describe their interview.

CHAPTER XVII.

Oh! had he seen her bitter anguish,
Repentance might have reach'd his breast,
To watch her daily pine and languish
So young, so early, long for rest.

ANON.

THE season is over, with all its joys, its hopes, its mortifications and disappointments.

London is no longer the focus of intrigue. Country squires and their wives, but atoms in the London world, retire to lord it over their village domain, and set fashions to their country neighbours, amongst whom they forget the slights they have received in London, and now reap the fruits of their visit thereto, by the temporary importance it gives them.

Thus do they year after year, thus will they do till London ceases to exist.

Gentry without land repair abroad or take some shooting. Marriages negotiating are arranged or interrupted. Tailors are busily engaged in making travelling or shooting-suits, which Messrs. E. Moses and Son advertise cheap.

Waiters are dismissed from hotels, and cooks by Gunter. In fact, Madam, London is emptied, only a few, whose poverty, and not whose will, compels them to remain, wander moping and morose, like the monks we read of, who, being expelled from the Spanish monastery, still lingered round the scene of their former happiness.

It is needless for us to inform you of all this, old friend ; for you, who have never missed the *finale* of a season for forty years (Heavens ! is it as much as that ?) well know all the circumstances that attend the emptying of this vast cistern, and the channels through which its contents are poured forth into various parts of the world.

You read the "Morning Post," and see

whither most of the said contents, ay, and discontents, wend their way, and having seen them all pack up and depart, you yourself wend your way to Leamington, or watch flirtations at the country houses of your various friends. Yes, Madam, you watch them, and we fear that you intrigue, and plot, and foster them, acting the blind or deaf *chaperon*, while all your senses are awake to catch every word or action of those whose loves you favour.

We have long given up shooting. Our eyes are weak, our hands tremble, and we can no longer knock down the partridge on the wing, nor the swift hare as he runs along the meadow. Our legs are shaky, and though we may don the leather gaiter and the brown shooting-jacket, they have not that seven-league effect of days of yore. Therefore, when, tired of our London gaiety, we wish to find amusement elsewhere, we seek our pleasure at those places on the continent where foreigners do congregate with Englishmen, and where natives of many lands vie one with another to lose their money and their reputations, if indeed the latter be not already gone.

Hither is it that we wend our way, and to one of these resorts, the year in which our story is laid, did our nephew Charley accompany us. Poor boy ! he had few friends, even now in his days of wealth, and he knew that, cross and testy as we may be, we loved him dearly. Therefore did he volunteer to accompany us on our journey to Kursaalhausen, an offer never made, by the way, in his days of poverty when he knew we should insist on paying, and when he feared he might be suspected of mercenary motives.

We had travelled slowly, sleeping at nights at comfortable inns and journeying as became our wealth, convenience, and importance. At length we had arrived at an ancient city on the Rhine, the name of which we do not intend to mention, inasmuch as if in describing our adventures we mention the name of any place, some friend or acquaintance, should we, as we may or may not do, relate an encounter, will straightway cut us to our face, and abuse us behind our back, for having caricatured him, her or them. Heaven knows what we relate is no caricature. Truth may be stronger than fiction ;

but our picture is not overcharged ; it even falls below the mark of reality. We had arrived, as before has been stated, at a city on the Rhine, and although we repudiate any description of the place, we think we may be safe in saying that it possessed a bridge of boats, many hotels and a castle opposite.

Here had we arrived, and after severe contests with the waiters who stared at us, and smiled unmoved at our requests, had by the assistance of our courier, managed to procure sustenance.

We were sitting after dinner perusing "Galignani," in our room, that looked upon the drab-coloured river. Charles and ourselves indulging in our favourite pastime, which we will not mention, as we imbibed our coffee and silently watched the sun sinking behind the turrets of the keep opposite. Clouds burst from over our table and curled into graceful curls and wreaths over the balcony, and we were in a pleasing trance, both, for the moment perhaps, forgetting our griefs in the calm softness of our occupation.

The door opened and we turned round. A girl's face appeared for a moment, and as though

its owner had discovered her mistake in the room, it was immediately withdrawn. We, however, had recognized it. It was Emmeline Brookes.

Our coffee was finished, and we sat still, unwilling to occupy ourselves in any more useful manner. We were digesting our meal with that intense satisfaction felt, when replenished with the good things of this life, we lean back in our chairs and con over the events of the said life in roseate hues. We were not in a position to move, our bosoms heaved with the calm happiness of a full stomach, and we puffed our Martinez, and watched the sun sinking deeper and deeper, loath to move or even to converse. Charles was perhaps dreaming happy dreams, and we perhaps, were softened with memories of times long past and faded, of scenes that even now indistinctly haunt us ; scenes stamped upon our minds, now faint but never delible.

The door opens, and Rompf, our courier, enters to ask us if we wish to go to the play. Rompf knew we did not wish to go ; but Rompf had news to communicate, and Rompf never entered the room, unsummoned, without some plausible pretext.

"Rompf, bring my slippers," growled our nephew; and Rompf was preparing to order Dolman, Charles' body-servant, to attend to his master's behests. Rompf never performed menial offices when there was any one else to do them, though Rompf alone was the most attentive of couriers, and serviceable of valets.

"Stop a moment, Rompf," we interrupted, "stop a moment. Who is staying in the house?"

"I hev not look yet in the stranger-book," answered Rompf.

"Nonsense," we replied, "you must know some of the names. Any friends of ours? English, eh?"

"Dere is der Count zu Ganzfleisch, Minister at London," answered the courier, anxious by delay to make his intelligence valued. "You know him, Sare, I believe?"

"Yes; any one else?"

"Dere is his Highness the Gross Herzog von Hesse Donnerstag, on the thaird flore."

"Any English?"

"Yes, Sare, two or tree," continued Rompf, guessing from our anxiety that we had some

reason for asking. "Dere is Major-General Sare Hairy Bazz"—the name was not quite intelligible—"and Sare Basil Brooke and his lady, one daughter, and society of servant; Lady Trevethen, and society of servant."

"Who, in G—d's name?" thundered Charley, pale and trembling, as, shaken from his lethargy, he stood up. "Sir Basil and Lady Brooke: where are they?"

"Next room," pointed the imperturbable Rompf, as Charley fell back into his chair.

Rompf was dispatched to obtain permission for us to call upon our relatives. Rompf returned with the desired answer, and we entered the adjoining room.

"Ah! how are you, how are you?" said Sir Basil, as he rose from the table at which he was writing.

The old rogue gave us the letter to post, as we afterwards went down stairs, and we saw it was directed to Mrs. Dudley. His daughter had been sacrificed for this woman; she was dying, that this woman might live in luxury; but still Sir Basil could find it in his heart to write to her, in the presence of his injured daughter.

Blondelle was not in the room. Emmeline, with a heightened colour and sparkling eye, greeted her cousin and ourselves as we entered. Lady Brooke was lying on the sofa. She said she was tired, and had caught a slight cold. We were convinced that the old hypocrite was bilious.

Blondelle came into the room, and Emmeline rushed to meet her.

"Emmeline, dear child," cried her mother, in marked accents, "pray give Lady Trevethen an arm-chair, and ask her if she would like the window opened or closed; she says she is unwell."

No one spoke a word; but as I looked at Charles, I could feel that behind his compressed lips lurked a bitter curse, and we ourselves could have yelled one into the old woman's ears.

Lady Trevethen was indeed unwell; her life would evidently not much longer be a burden to her.

Those dark gazing eyes were sunk deep into their sockets, and two lines traced round them seemed to have borrowed somewhat of their blackness. Lines were distinct on her cheek—those heavy lines of care—and pale and death-

like was the face that we had seen, not many months before, ruddy with health and happiness.

We knew not how to address her, and having spoken a few words of customary civility, she seemed as though at a loss for further conversation. Sir Basil continued crossing the already well-filled pages of his letter to his leman, and Lady Brooke preserved her silence and her dignity, never speaking unless to interrupt any kindness shown, or any observation made, by Emmeline to her sister.

Thus had Blondelle lived since she had left the roof of her aunt, with whom she had taken refuge after leaving her father's house.

Gladly would she have remained with the good, kind old woman, had she been allowed ; but Sir Guy and the good mother had, in a long conference, decided that she should be brought to Sir Basil's house, and there undergo a treatment that should ultimately force her to return to her husband.

She, poor girl ! could offer no resistance to this plan ; she had resolved never to reveal the cause of her quitting her husband's roof, and, without any given reason, Lady Brooke, the aunt, could not encourage her in disobedience to

the expressed wishes of those who had, by natural ties, claims to her consideration. Ties how grossly outraged ! claims how shamefully abused !

Poor Blondelle ! she would not betray what she considered her father's shame, and thus wring, as she thought, her mother's heart : that mother who had no more compunction in torturing her daughter than she would have experienced annoyance in hearing of her husband's infidelity.

Though Blondelle had never mentioned to living being, save—and then under promise of the strictest secrecy—to her sister, the scene that had made her fly from Sir Guy's house, Lady Brooke knew every circumstance. Sir Guy had related to her the whole, and the pair had chuckled over it together. Yet still did Lady Brooke wish to send her daughter back to this den of debauchery, and to accomplish this object she played upon her feelings, strained every nerve to make the girl's life miserable, to compel her once again to assume the bitter yoke of bitterest slavery.

Yes, Lady Brooke knew every circumstance of her daughter's escape, yet did she never raise her voice in her defence, or take one step

to refute the obloquy and calumny that the kind world was raising with regard to her.

“ Alas ! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun ! ”

After Blondelle's separation from Sir Guy, the whole world (we scarcely speak hyperbolically), had united in a cry of hate and execration against her.

Women, women were the first to raise the shout of condemnation. Mothers and daughters who would have married Sir Guy, and have been content to reign the sovereign sultana of his harem. Every species of story was circulated that the

“ Vermin slander, bred in abject minds
Of thoughts impure, by vile tongues animate, ”

could invent. Young ladies asked their partners after Lady Trevethen with a sneer, and dowagers shook the feathers on their bewigged heads and whispered how shocking, how indecent, and how heartless was her conduct.

Some few there were, indeed, who knowing

the bride and bridegroom, could guess pretty correctly at the real state of affairs, and form conclusions of their own. You, Miss Dalton, we believe, formed a softer judgment, and without the assumption of Christian feeling and pious disposition of many of Blondelle's detractresses, your instinctive kindness of heart made your opinion one much more nearly allied to charity.

Mr. Curt also was in the charitable minority, and in his way defended Blondelle's conduct. He never could discover, he said, why she had ever married the infernal hairdresser; and his only wonder was, why she had not left him sooner. Captain Derven's sentiments entirely coincided with those of Mr. Curt; and Lord Martinet, again curling his moustache said that really the girl need not be called on for a reason for leaving her lord, who was himself a living excuse for any injuries that could be done to him.

In the state of perplexity in which we found ourselves placed, we racked our brains to find some excuse to escape, or to make our position

pleasant. The position was especially galling to us, who plume ourselves peculiarly on keeping our mind equal in adverse circumstances, and never losing our ground or feeling awkward in society. We, therefore, having at length seized an idea, proposed to the young ladies a walk to the opposite side of the river, to examine the castle and some neighbouring ruins by the light of the moon then shining.

Emmeline's face brightened at the proposal which would give them both an opportunity of speaking freely with her cousin, and a gleam of satisfaction faintly spread the features of her unfortunate sister.

Lady Brooke perceived that gleam, and ever watchful to annoy her daughter,

"Emmeline must not go out in the night-air," she said; "Lady Trevethen, of course can follow her own inclinations."

But Sir Basil seeing the disgust which we no longer attempted to disguise, and anxious not to annoy his ward, as he still called Charley, having certain vague ideas of a loan, supported Emmeline's remonstrances, and Lady Brooke at length gave a grumbling assent, coupling it

with some malicious allusion to poor Blondelle.

The moon, as we have said, was shining, and with the two girls muffled up, we started for our peregrinations in the streets of the ancient city.

We instinctively offered our arm to Emmeline, we did so without a thought, and Charley placed on his the small hand he would fain have called his own, but which, we felt, ere many months should pass away, would pass away with them.

Emmeline walked with us, and told us all she could of the mournful story. We felt happy at being the confidant of the fair, gentle girl, and we felt also an inward pleasure in diving into the secrets of her mind, as she discoursed to us pleasantly in our walk. Little did she think, poor child, as she told us her simple tale, that beneath her words could be discovered lurking other thoughts she fancied concealed in her heart, and that the years that had passed over our head had taught us to comprehend the full meaning of her phrases. Charles and Blondelle were close to us as we slowly ascended the hill; but though we often listened we never heard

them converse. Probably their arms were pressed against each other, but no word passed their lips, their thoughts engrossed them, and the only sound was the frequent cough of poor Blondelle.

We had gained the top of the hill. There was the old castle, and near, the ruined keep that could probably have told many stories similar to the one which had passed beneath our eyes. If Charley thought upon the subject, he probably envied the scenes those gray stones may have witnessed, ere fidelity was deemed a fair target for jesters, and

“Constancy a crime!”

When the recreant husband might be called to account for his laches, and force of arms could sever the bond which now-a-days can only be untied for the wealthy sinner.

The night-air was beginning to chill the invalid, and we prepared to return to our inn. We had arranged together to continue our journey to Kursaalhausen, and Charley, with ourselves, well knew that Sir Basil and his worthy dame would have no objection to make use of our carriage, and sitting-room and servants,

even though joined to our society. Emmeline came with us down the hill, while Charley assiduously helped his other cousin in the descent. We arrived first at the Bridge of Boats, over which we must pass, and there we waited, gazing on the lights down the river, whose winding curves seemed more beautiful than ever in the green light of the moon.

Emmeline and ourselves stood together, and at some little distance apart were the other two of our little party. Emmeline and ourselves watched the ripples of the river as it rushed against the bows of the boats that formed the bridge, and only occasionally uttered some common-place, relative to the coldness of the night, or the beauty of the view.

In a word, we were loath to interrupt the interview of those two dearest to us, and to each other; and we waited till they should, of their own accord, propose our returning within doors. Still they stood side by side; and though scarcely a word was interchanged, they did not seem inclined to separate.

They approach each other nearer, and he bends over her, and whispers something in her ear; then is there a sound resembling a groan of

agony, a sob, a stifled cry of anguish and despair. No articulate word reaches us, but with our companion we start and tremble at the sound, and look upon each other with grief and intense anxiety; then there is again a dead pause, and we hear nothing but the ripple of the river.

Now the boy is speaking, but in accents so low, that we cannot hear the words. We discovered afterwards what he had said in that conversation. He entreats her he has loved so truly, so devotedly, to fly with him!—to break the links, the captive chains by which she had been bound, and to seek with him some home where together they might live and die.

But Blondelle's pure soul revolts at the very thought. Death is too nigh to be talked of lightly; and mournfully and gently she chides him for his rash words, and bids him no longer to fix his happiness to hers. Her lot in life is cast. Before long, Death will have claimed his due; and though, despite herself, she cannot help loving him whom she had

loved, ere loving was a crime, she would never consent to a deed which would destroy the only happiness she could now anticipate—a happiness not of this world.

Charley dare not again repeat his proposal. The low, soft tones that had conveyed the refusal were firm, though gentle and loving. They were as warnings from the grave, and bade him think of things far different from those, which had hitherto occupied his mind, in a voice that would not brook denial. The words sank into his heart, and from that moment he was another man.

Then we saw the hand of the girl extended, as though she was giving something to her lover. It was a small anchor that was heretofore dependent from her watch—the emblem of Hope. Poor girl! it was the only wreck that remained to her, and that she gave away to one who still might have prospects of happiness. She gave to him the solitary remnant of a feeling that had passed away from her. She gave the last crumb of hope left, to one in whom it was also nearly extinct.

As the gift was given, the trembling hand of the girl turned ere it had deposited its burden in the hand of the boy, and the symbol of Hope fell into the gurgling stream.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Sacrifice and self-devotion hallow earth and fill the skies.

R. M. MILNES.

Doom'd to a parent's judgment, all unjust.

CRABBE.

It will be needless to relate to you all the circumstances of our journey to Kursaalhausen, whither we all were bound. We travelled very slowly, for Blondelle grew daily weaker and weaker; her cough became more hollow, and the rings and lines in her face deeper and more sharply marked.

On our arrival at our destination, she underwent an attack that laid her up for several

days, during which time we did not see her ; but still Lady Brooke did not relax her bitter civility. She could not sympathise with her daughter, or comprehend the fibre of that tender heart which she had broken, or that sensitiveness which was startled at every slight, and which wore its feeble frame till it sunk and sunk to die.

Gradually she grew better ; but paler than ever was her cheek, more sunken was her eye. The hand of death was making itself still more visible. It had taken its last clutch, and was dragging its victim slowly and surely to the grave.

Sir Basil was kinder to his child ; but Lady Brooke still persisted in her blindness, and would not believe, even though the appearance of her child, who looked as one risen from the dead, told plainly whither she was bound.

It was a sad, sad party ; and still more sad in that we all forced our spirits to raise those of poor Blondelle. She, unwilling to destroy our happiness, dear child, at times endeavoured to appear amused by our sallies, but her efforts were useless ; for the forced smile could not

deceive, and her thoughts could evidently not be turned to gaiety. Ever when alone, and unassumingly would she turn for comfort to that book whence she had derived so much, and constantly would the twins retire and pray for strength; the one for the strength to meet her doom, the other for the strength to bear the parting.

There was also a good clergyman at Kursaal-hausen, a pious man, with whom Blondelle had frequent interviews. Before his arrival at that place, he had been the victim of persecution and hatred. Since, he has likewise had to deal with intolerance in those who profess tolerance. Garbled versions of his conversations, gathered and retailed by eaves-droppers, have been brought to bear against him, and suborners have denounced him on the evidence of spies; but had you seen him, Madam, as we saw him, attending the dying girl, and preparing her spirit for its everlasting home, you would, like us, felt the calumny of the representations against him, and like us, have honoured, ay, even loved him.

Yes! poor Blondelle was conscious of the

fate that was impending, and conscious, she endeavoured to fit herself for it. She secluded herself as much as possible from the society of her family, to commune with her own thoughts, and with Him at whose judgment-seat she was so shortly to appear; and only that consideration for the feelings of others that ever animated her actions, induced her to join in our recreations. She felt that deference in small things, to the wishes of those near, is true Christianity, and that to wrap one's-self up exclusively, even in a garment of righteousness, is selfishness.

In the hope of distracting her, we one night proposed to her to accompany us to one of the early balls, given weekly by the owners of the gaming-tables.

The two girls, accompanied by Charles and ourselves, prepared themselves for the evening amusement unopposed by Lady Brooke, even though Sir Basil is absent. It seemed as though, even with her cold disposition, at length a glimmering of the truth had begun to dawn upon her; for while the sarcasm and the bitter saying were never wanting, Emmeline

was no longer forbidden to associate with her dying sister, though often warned of the danger of corruption she thereby incurred.

We entered the large ball-room, and the flush of excitement and disease brightened in the cheek of Blondelle, as she heard the merry strains of the band, and saw the dancers in their gliding round.

Not many months before, she would have joined in it merrily as those before her, and perchance with a merriment tenfold as innocent as theirs ; for there were not many at the ball whose conduct would bear much scrutiny.

Blondelle insisted that her sister and her cousin should not sit by her side during the evening. It would please her, she said, to see them dance ; she would never dance again : and the two, though their minds were not in the humour for the amusement, obeyed her behests ; they never hesitated to comply with her slightest wish.

The two were waltzing, Blondelle was seated on a bench, and we were standing near her leaning against a pillar. We were thinking of her fate and her misfortunes ; on the

unequal lots of life, and on other matters, which have occupied the thoughts of deeper philosophers than ourselves.

The poor girl was watching those two she loved so well, attentively. She was thinking on their future fate; on the temptations through which they would have to pass when she should be beyond temptation; on the sorrows they would have to experience when she would be beyond the reach of troubling, and she thought, poor injured child, that not amongst the least of their griefs would be one occasioned by her passing from this weary mortality, and that even in this grief of which she would be the cause, she could not partake. Then she felt, perhaps, happy at her early passing away; for she hoped that her spirit might still hover near them, and shed soft memories on their path to keep them from evil; and perchance that if she gained the crown of immortal life, for which she prayed continually, she might in the realms of bliss above, mediate for those she had loved in life, and intercede for them with the Recording Angel.

Might not the holy girl rely upon the attainment of future happiness? May she not hope, as says the French orator, to receive the consolations promised to those who weep? Would not the God of mercy accept her afflictions as an agreeable surprise, place her in Abraham's bosom, and content with her sad lot, for the future spare her family such terrible lessons?

This may seem a strange reverie for a ball-room; but such were doubtless the thoughts that shapelessly crossed Blondelle's mind, as she watched the movements of the two she was so soon to leave.

We, as we have before said, were also occupied with similar thoughts; but thoughts how much less innocently fashioned!

What is it? We feel a pressure on our arm, and are startled from our dream. Blondelle is standing by our side. Her eyes are staring, as though on a spirit: the eyeballs are starting from her head, and the mouth is half-open. She points with one hand, while with the other she clutches our arm.

"Where? What is the matter?" we ask;

but the girl answers nothing, and still gazes, as appears to us, on vacancy.

The music is playing an air that must bewilder those who are dancing to its measure ; a giddy, intoxicating tune. Emmeline and our nephew are twirling round and round ; but not in any manner to cause anxiety.

“ Look—look !” Blondelle gasps. “ Look !” she almost cries, and we turn our eyes in the direction to which she is pointing.

There, at the other corner of the room, diagonally from the spot where we are placed, is Sir Basil, hopping about in the waltz with the air of one not practised in such exercise. The locks of his wig were streaming with a partner, who is evidently French. Her dark-painted eyes, her dress, so well assorted, but so assuming, betray her origin, and the bold stare betokens her position. We afterwards were informed that she had made a bet, that on that evening her English admirer should waltz with her ; and there indeed was the English Baronet. Yet why the perturbation of his daughter ? Why should she gaze ? and why should her heart break with such agonizing



throbs? Her hand releases its hold on our arm. The staring eye is closed. She totters to our side. Her face is ashy white; and had we not supported her, she would have fallen on the floor.

Her sister and her cousin, seeing Blondelle's swoon, rush to assist her, but they have not perceived its cause. Sir Basil wisely leaves the room; and amidst the proffered services of many, we bear the fainting girl to her home at the neighbouring inn.

The death-blow, the last, had been given. The woman dancing with Sir Basil was one of those whom Blondelle had seen joining in the orgy at her husband's house.

CHAPTER XIX.

Dwell thou in endless light, discharged soul,
Freed now from nature's and from fortune's trust,
While on this fluent globe my glass shall roll,
And run the rest of my remaining dust.

SIR HENRY WOTTON.

MADAM, like ourselves, you have seen more than once in your life-time a girl daily consuming away till nought has been left, and she falls into the grave that has been for months preparing for her.

You have seen the look of fictitious health that at times brightens the face of the sufferer ; the hectic flush and the bright eye. You have at moments even yourself been deceived, and entertained hopes that the day has been postponed ; that Death has for the time relented, and

seeking other prey, will not rob you so soon as you had anticipated.

But Death is not satisfied with the old worn-out bodies that fall daily at his feet ; he at times will show his might, and seize the young in their youth, and the healthy in their strength. His weapons are many, his modes of offence varied. He will attack with a cold breeze that strikes the body ; or a heavy affliction to chill the soul. He will lurk in flowers and in sunny places, or at times with bolder show he takes giant strides from country to country, laying all around him desolate, and despite your preparations and defences, he passes over you like a tempest, destroying families and houses, systems and vested rights, or, like a conqueror he lays thousands prostrate before him. A mighty conqueror indeed is Death, and well has he been termed a King.

As you have seen, so did we see poor Blondelle daily perishing, a victim to this dread potentate. We watched her preparations for her fate, for a state of life that could scarcely be more pure, more holy, than that in which she had already lived. Yet while we grieved, we often thought

that perchance her lot was happier than ours. It was better for her, perhaps, to be cut off in her young days, hoping and working for her redemption, and resigned to the will of Providence, than to live to be indurated to trouble, till she should no longer see the hand of Heaven in her misfortunes, and no longer regard them as an ordeal, but as a vexation, to be borne and overcome.

We may philosophise, and see the uselessness of grief, but still we cannot always be consoled by our philosophy ; and as the young bride, to whom what should have been a happiness had been a blight, “ droop’d and droop’d before us,” no science could heal the wound, no learning stop our tears.

She knew her approaching fate, we knew it, and our efforts were now devoted to the sole object of making her last days happy. Even Lady Brooke moderated her bitterness, and sayings ; for she knew that her daughter’s days were numbered, and that while her own hopes of grandeur were at an end, no effort nor hatred could recal them. Blondelle was left at peace. Like a condemned criminal, Blondelle

was beyond further punishment; for rancour now was as useless as though she had been already laid under the turf.

It was a sad house, Sir Basil's house at Kursaalhausen. Through its thin walls perpetually sounded the tearing ~~ough~~ of the dying girl. Sad was it to see her sunken cheek and brilliant eye, which seemed as visible coals of the fire internally consuming her. Sad was it to see the handkerchief applied to her mouth, and removed covered with the deep colour of her life's blood. Sad was it to see the mourning boy and the sister who would, we believe, have changed places to have saved that well-beloved one. We believe, we say, ay, we do believe. Though we have long lost confidence in human devotion, even our cynical soul gave credit to their affection. Those young creatures would have sacrificed for Blondelle that long career that may be spread before them. Madam, we doubt if you or ourselves would have yielded the small remaining portion of our lives.

“Now 'tis little joy
To know I'm further off from heav'n
Than when I was a boy.”

Yet, Madam, we feel it, how every year that passes and brings us nearer to our end, takes us farther from our God. We feel since we have seen the bride's dying hours, how useless is our worldly wisdom on which we pride ourselves, our acquaintances, our prosperity. The young girl dying in the spring of her youth, innocent, unversed in the world's way, and only in its adversity, was prepared to leave the world to which we so fondly cling, relying on the promises made to the weary and distressed, and, apart from the gross joys and griefs of this earth, sure of practising a holy life where no trouble should molest her, and where she should be at peace from suffering.

The flame of life blazed up once more, and the girl wishing to take advantage of the temporary alleviation from pain, entreated to be taken once more to her native land, that she might die surrounded by all those she loved, and be buried in a nook of a green churchyard she had long fancied in her mind. How could her request be denied?

By easy stages did we take her to her home, her tomb. Her only fear was lest she should die

before she could reach the country where the few happy days of her life had been passed, before she could behold her aunt, and accomplish a purpose she had formed in her own mind.

The leaf had fallen, and was blown away by the time we arrived in London; the trees spread their branches in the air, covered with fantastic snow, which also covered the stones in the streets.

Blondelle would have gone to the cottage at Richmond, where her aunt dwelt, but her prostration forbade it, and the good old woman came to spend the few remaining days with her she had loved and fostered from her childhood.

We had gone to bed one night; to bed, as say the poets, but not to sleep. The physician had told us that his patient in twenty-four hours would be numbered with the angels. We lay awake with a heavy aching at our heart, and would have been by the side of the dying one, had we been allowed. Charles, who had taken up his abode with us, had not yet returned, and we waited his arrival to offer him any consolation in our power, though consolation had long lost its efficacy.

The snow was pouring fast ; it covered our window-sill and the ground about the house ; but still he did not enter. Though intent on catching every sound, we could not hear the key turning in the latch, nor his step as he passed our door to his own room. One o'clock struck—two—three ; yet still he did not come. We could bear our position no longer ; we felt that in the state of things that existed, we had no right in bed at all, and summoning Rompf, still with us, we prepared to sally forth to find our boy.

Calling a cab, we bade the driver take us to the end of the street where Blondelle lay, not venturing to drive to the door ; for we know how the quick ears of the dying perceive the slightest sound, and even though the street was covered with straw, we feared to disturb by the sound of wheels, the last moments of the poor girl. We approached the door, and there in the cold snow, fainting upon the steps, lay Charles, our nephew.

Forced to leave the house by those decencies of life, of which Lady Brooke could think even at this juncture, he had remained and lingered

near the house, where lay the wreck of all he loved.

We took him home, and having restored him, we stayed together, waiting the summons that we felt conscious ere long would arrive. We were not wrong in the presentiment, nor was it long before it was fulfilled.

At six in the morning, Thomas, knocking at the door, told us, in a faltering voice, that our presence was required. His young lady had asked for us herself, and he had hastened to bring us to witness the last scene of the doleful tragedy.

We were taken to the room where lay the girl so soon to leave the world, in which care alone had been her lot.

Near her were her relatives ; her sister held one hand, and cooled the fevered forehead, while her aunt held between two hands the wasted fingers that lay listlessly on the pillow. Her father and her mother gazed mournfully upon the ruin they had caused—perhaps with remorse, perhaps only with regret at the failure of their hopes. The good clergyman read words of consolation in a low tone ; and near him stood—Mary Archer.

Ay, Mary Archer—summoned to the scene by the sufferer—Mary Archer, with whom Blondelle had had more than one interview since her arrival, and who next day returned to Sir Guy Trevethen his pension, the wages of her sin.

The eyes were lifted as we entered the room, and a smile—a holy angel-smile—bespread the angel-face.

“Now is done thy long day’s work,
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.”

There lay the bride—the murdered. Yes, murdered by social laws, by legal methods, murdered, as though by a highwayman, for wealth. There she lay, she whose life had been blighted, but by no sin of her own—she who had been maligned, calumniated because that she could not callously live with the perjured, the adulterer—because she would not live a lie—because she could not cast from her bosom its sacred instincts!

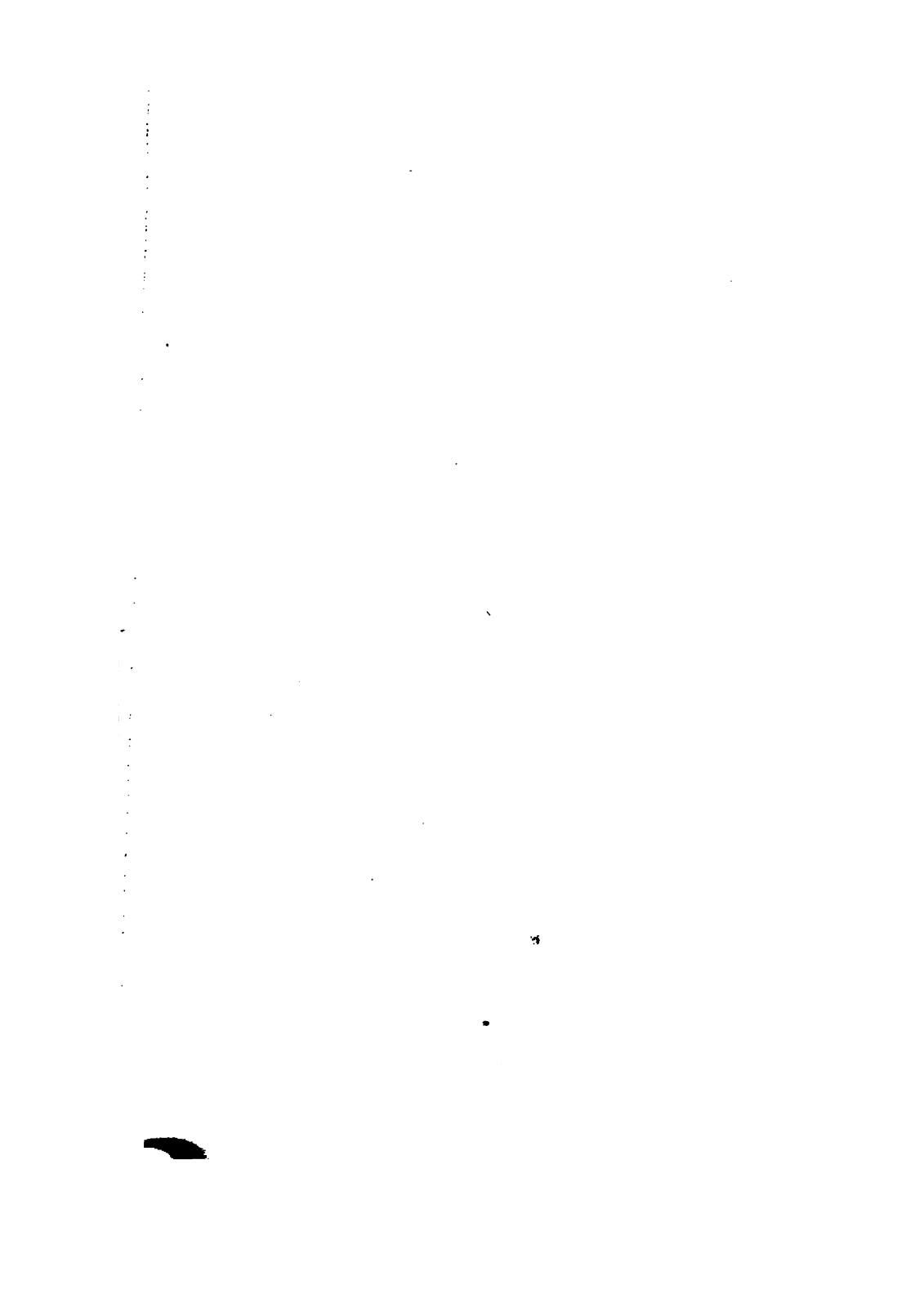
She spoke to her early lover. She kissed him. It was a kiss of peace—of sisterly love. She did not even regret the parting, for she

had "heard the angels call," and she bade him trust, and love, and hope that the day should come when they might meet in those regions of happiness, where alone is the peace for which nought can compensate. Then the dying one pressed the hands of those around her ; and she kissed her parents, and smiled on them a smile of forgiveness ; for careful even then of their feelings, she would not utter words that might annoy them who could not understand her tenderness. She smiled, and kissed her aunt and her sister, and she bid us farewell. She kissed the Magdalene, the penitent, and that kiss sealed her contrition.

Then, as did the holy man of Jarrow, did she distribute small gifts to those she loved ; trifles that she in life had valued ; and she bid them once more farewell ; once more, and it was for ever. We knelt, and the holy priest raised up the prayer of commendation. We watched the lips moving, while nought was heard but the low accents of the holy man. All present prayed — ay, even those who for years had never bent before their Maker. The blessing was given, and we knelt in

silence round. No sound was heard, for the bitter grief was too heavy even for a sob.

Then we looked, and the eyes were turned upwards with a happy smile, as though a glimpse of the company of heaven was allowed to one who was about to join them, with the sight of angels welcoming one whose sufferings were ended ; and we saw the spirit ebbing, and the soul preparing to depart !



NOTES.

A.—Page 141.

We are aware that the declaration on the part of Sir Guy Trevethen may appear to the reader to be too abruptly worded to be natural. We can only say in reply, however, that in a case similar to that related in the text, which has passed beneath our own personal observation, the words we have put in Sir Guy's mouth were nearly literally employed. So true is it, that *le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable*.

B.—Page 217.

We feel we are taking a most unwarrantable liberty in the narration we have thus made. According to our English etiquette, we may not even entertain good wishes towards those to whom we have not been presented.

We, however, really heartily bid the young couple good speed ; and we trust we shall be forgiven for so doing, while we give the gallant bridegroom fair warning that we do not fight, and will shelter ourselves under our anonymous character, in case of his wrath being excited against us.

Should the fair bride wish to express her forgiveness for this our breach of decorum, a note sent to us, care of our publisher, will find us ; and, if deemed worthy her acceptance, a copy of this work will be sent her as a peace-offering and a wedding-gift.

END.

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